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DECEMBER 2015–FEBRUARY 2016 Volume 24 No. 1
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EMT talks to Stephen Cleobury about new recording technology

AB ORIENTE

Renaissance polyphony in Hong Kong

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EDITOR'S CHOICE CD: ANDREA GABRIELI IN VENICE

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PAN-HANDELLERS

The Brook Street Band turns 20 enthusiastic as ever for Georg Frideric

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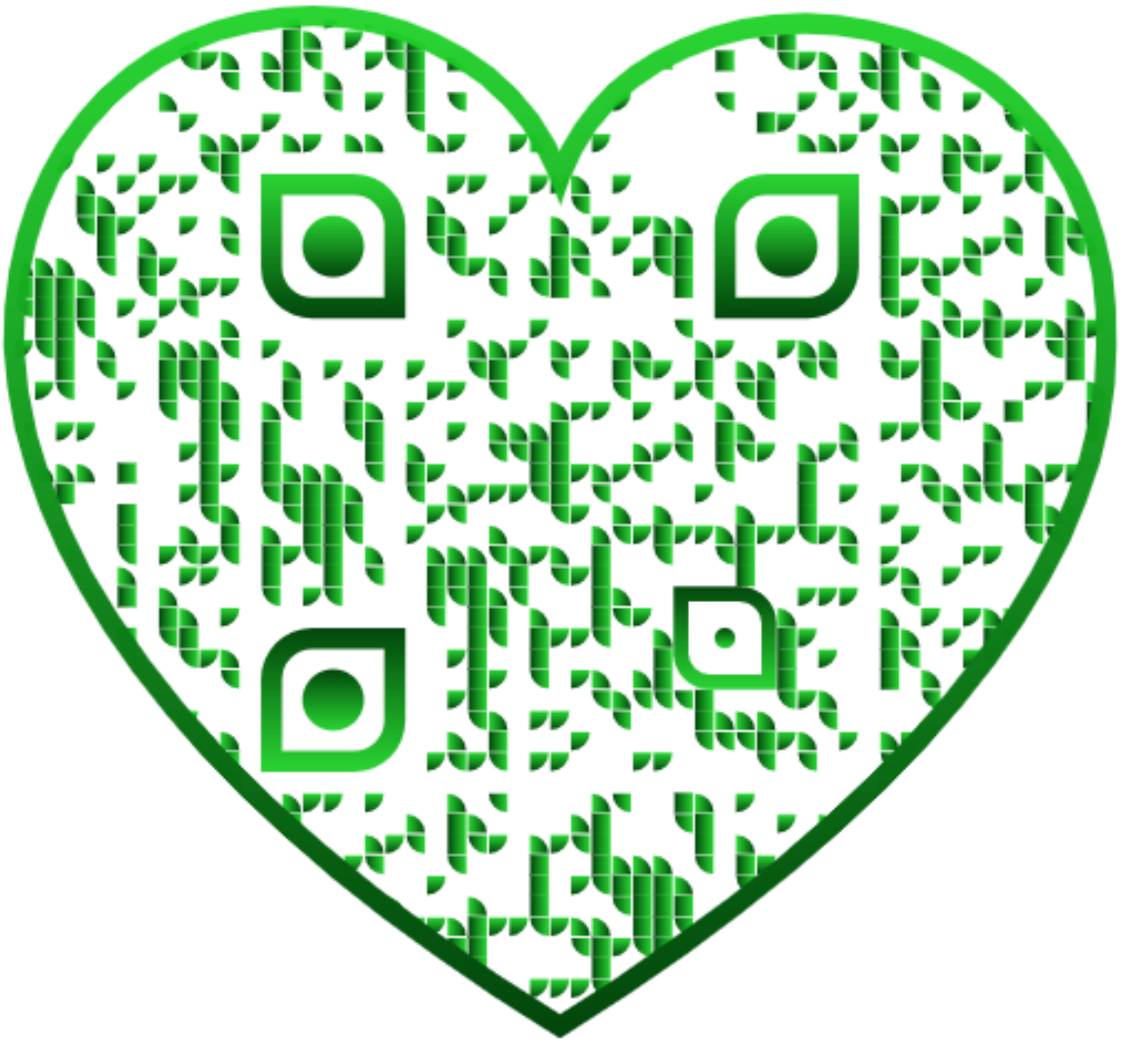
PLUS even more NEWS, COMMENT, REVIEWS and the DEFINITIVE GUIDE to what's on in the early music world



ST JOHN'S SMITH SQUARE

30th CHRISTMAS FESTIVAL

11–23 December 2015

Artistic Director Stephen Layton

St John's Smith Square
Choir of Christ Church Cathedral
Choir of King's College London
Ex Cathedra
Peter Phillips & The Tallis Scholars
Stephen Layton & Polyphony
Thomas Trotter
National Youth Music Theatre

Friday 11 December 7.30pm
CHOIR OF KING'S COLLEGE LONDON
Voices of Enchantment
Music by Leighton, Carver and Spem in Alium by Tallis

Saturday 12 December 7.30pm
CHAPELLE DU ROI
Christmas Music form the Chapel Royal Choirs of Marian England and Philip of Spain

Sunday 13 December 7.30pm
SIGLO DE ORO
A Christmas Passion
Nativity hymns and lullabies followed by 'The Little Match Girl Passion' by David Lang, after Hans Christian Anderson

Monday 14 December 7.30pm
CHOIR OF CHRIST CHURCH CATHEDRAL, OXFORD
The Gift of Christmas
Introduced by Howard Goodall.
A programme of the best-loved Christmas music presented in an informative and entertaining festive way

Tuesday 15 December 7.30pm
EX CATHEDRA
Christmas Music by Candlelight
An atmospheric concert with music by Nicolai, Bach, Sandström, James MacMillan and Ēriks Ešenvalds

Wednesday 16 December 7.30pm
THE CHOIR OF MERTON COLLEGE, OXFORD
Featuring music from The Merton Choirbook, composed specially for the Choir to celebrate Merton College's 750th anniversary

Thursday 17 December 1.05pm
THOMAS TROTTER
One of Britain's most widely admired musicians performing Bach, Mozart, Schumann, Prokofiev and Liszt

Thursday 17 December 7.30pm
ENSEMBLE PLUS ULTRA
O Come, Emmanuel!
Byrd's spectacular Advent Propers, Victoria's Missa Ave Regina caelorum and more

Friday 18 December 7.30pm
CHOIR OF CLARE COLLEGE, CAMBRIDGE
Programme includes Tavener's Ex Maria Virgine: A Christmas Sequence, ten years on from its completion on Christmas Day 2005

Saturday 19 December 7.30pm
THE TALLIS SCHOLARS
One of the most famous masses ever written for Christmas Day, Tallis' seven-voice Missa Puer natus est nobis, along with music by Sheppard and Arvo Pärt

Sunday 20 December 7.30pm
NATIONAL YOUTH MUSIC THEATRE
A seasonal concert of readings, music and staged extracts from the award-winning company

Mon 21 December 7.30pm
SOLOMON'S KNOT
Christmas in Leipzig
2 settings of the Magnificat by Bach and Kuhnau, alongside Schelle's Machet die Tore weit

Tuesday 22 December 7.30pm
CHOIR OF TRINITY COLLEGE CAMBRIDGE & ORCHESTRA OF THE AGE OF ENLIGHTENMENT
Stephen Layton director
Bach Mass in B minor

Wednesday 23 December 7.30pm
POLYPHONY & ORCHESTRA OF THE AGE OF ENLIGHTENMENT
Stephen Layton director
Handel Messiah

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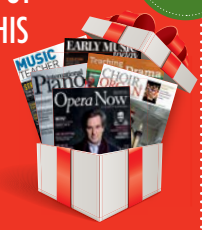

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Friday 11 December, 7.30pm
Choir of Magdalen College, Oxford
Fantasia on Christmas Carols
A Christmas concert including works by Frescobaldi, Victoria, J.C.F. Bach and carols, plus Vaughan Williams' magical *Fantasia on Christmas Carols*.

Thursday 11 February, 7.30pm
Tenebrae
Le Choeur Chant du Coeur
French choral music from the 12th to 20th centuries by Brumel, de Séverac, Pérotin, Messiaen, Duruflé and Poulenc.

Thursday 17 March, 7.30pm
Alamire
Anne Boleyn's Songbook
Works by early 16th-century composers, including Compère, Brumel, Mouton and Josquin, alongside French chansons.

Wednesday 20 April, 7.30pm
The Tallis Scholars
'O Death, come close mine eyes'
Peter Phillips conducts *Lamentations* by Tallis, Nico Muhly, Phinot and Matthew Martin, plus works by Arvo Pärt and Byrd.

Wednesday 11 May, 7.30pm
Vox Luminis
Music at the time of Elizabeth I
Great English Renaissance music by composers including Tallis, White, Byrd, Tomkins, Ramsey, Weelkes and Morley.

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Corey Jamason harpsichord & organ
Steven Lehning violone & contrabass
Judith Malafronte voice
Robert Mealy violin & viola
Sandra Miller flute
Debra Nagy oboe & recorder
William Sharp voice
William Skeen violoncello & viola da gamba
Kenneth Slowik violoncello & viola da gamba
Dominic Teresi bassoon
John Thiessen trumpet
Jeffrey Thomas conductor

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RHINEGOLD PUBLISHING

WELCOME

There's a pleasing mix of the old and the new in this issue of *EMT*: at the same time as our cover stars the Brook Street Band celebrate their 20th birthday with no signs that their enthusiasm for the music of Handel is waning, we also profile French newcomers the Insula Orchestra and their experienced director Laurence Equilbey, and neatly fill the gap between them with Belgian sensations B'Rock, who are marking a decade of boisterous yet dedicated unconventionality.

News of a potentially revolutionary advance in listening technology is also hugely welcome, particularly when it showcases one of the 17th century's most innovative composers as performed by an institution with even older roots. The use of the latest surround-sound technology, hitherto only applied to cinematic blockbusters, on a disc of music by Giovanni Gabrieli — who, perhaps more than any of his contemporaries, pioneered the use of spatially separated groups of musicians in St Mark's, Venice — is a fantastic way of appealing to owners of expensive, high-end listening technology, especially when the performers are the world-famous choir of King's College, Cambridge; turn to page 54 to read director Stephen Cleobury's thoughts on the recording process.

Mention of King's allows me to segue neatly into the topic of Christmas: while its approach might have been heralded as far back as the summer by some high-street retailers (Selfridges, hang your head in shame: the first week of August is surely too early in anyone's book), I never really feel like it's imminent until I've heard some proper festive music — and whether you're after a lusty carol sing-along or would prefer to sit and let waves of sound wash over you, we've included plenty of information this issue about where you can find a concert or other event to suit your needs.

Additionally, if — like me — you have a tendency to leave your present-shopping until uncomfortably close to closing time on Christmas Eve, then we here at Rhinegold have something to take the pressure off your shoulders. A wide range of gift subscriptions to *Early Music Today* or any of our sister publications is now available, with savings of up to 35% on the full price — you can choose from print or digital packages, lasting between one and three years, which can be sent all over the world; visit www.rhinegold.co.uk to make your choice, and enter the code **XMAS15** at the check-out to receive your discount. What better way could there be of filling that awkward period between Christmas pudding and the Queen's television message, than to catch up with the latest early music goings-on over a glass of sherry?

In the meantime, I hope you all have a happy and restful festive period, and I look forward to welcoming you to the first *EMT* of 2016.

ADRIAN HORSEWOOD, ***EDITOR***

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NEWS

A NEW SEASON FOR BOSTON BAROQUE

KATHY WITTMAN

Daniela Mack with Boston Baroque in Vivaldi's *Juditha Triumphans*

Boston Baroque kicked off the beginning of its 2015–16 season in October with Vivaldi's *Juditha Triumphans*, and is set to raise the bar with the likes of Handel holiday celebrations for Christmas and Mozart's *Die Zauberflöte* in the New Year.

Boston Baroque, founded in 1973, was recently selected as a grantee of Bloomberg Philanthropies' Arts Innovation and Management Program, a title that comes with $150,000 to strengthen programming and organisational capacity. Executive Director Miguel A. Rodriguez says that they have 'a unique opportunity to dramatically expand our audience reach beyond the concert hall' by leveraging a new electronic media platform. Following the news, founder and music director Martin Pearlman is especially excited for the things in store this season, saying that 'Boston Baroque continues its commitment of bringing you today's leading performers.'

At the forefront of the new season was BBC Cardiff Singer of the World Competition finalist, mezzo-soprano Daniela Mack, who made her Boston Baroque debut with *Juditha Triumphans*. Another newcomer arrives in the form of fortepianist Kristian Bezuidenhout, who will be performing Beethoven's Piano Concerto No. 2 in a Classical concert which will also feature soprano Maria Labin in Beethoven's virtuosic canatata *Ah! perfido* and Haydn's *Scena di Berenice*.

Following the vast success of Boston Baroques rendition of Vivaldi on 23 October at NEC's Jordan Hall, the next big event will be Handel's *Messiah* on 11–12 December, which also features a debut from soprano Jeanine De Bique.

To keep up the holiday celebrations, the New Year's Concert will be kickstarting a new year of fantastic music with Vivaldi's *The Four Seasons* and Concerto for sopranino recorder. 'I have to admit that I left Boston Baroque's New Year's Concert a little intoxicated – and it had nothing to do with the bubbly served at intermission,' wrote David Bonetti in a review of last season's concert for *Berkshire Fine Arts*.

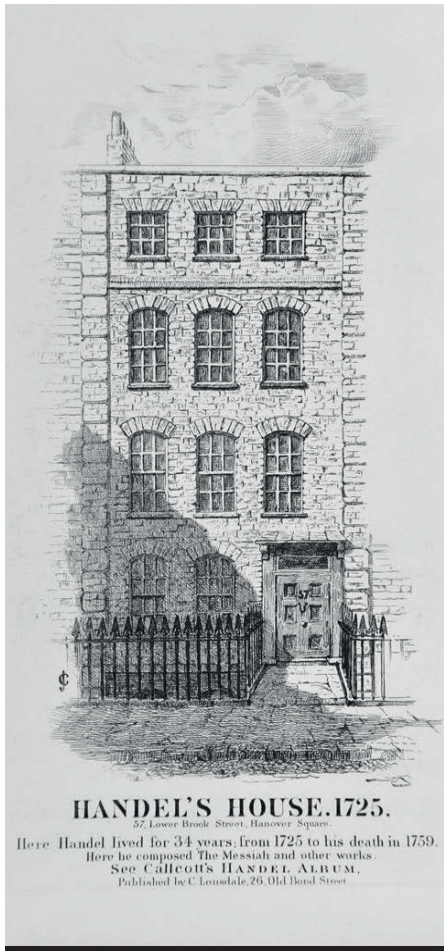
The season will close in the spring with its annual opera – a semi-staged production of Mozart's singspiel *Die Zauberflöte*, with tenor Nicholas Phan as Tamino and soprano Leah Partridge as Pamina.

www.bostonbaroque.org

SEASON PROGRAMME

- Handel's *Messiah*, 11–12 December, 7.30pm, NEC's Jordan Hall, Boston
- New Year's Celebrations: Vivaldi's *The Four Seasons* and Concerto for sopranino recorder, 31 December, 8pm; 1 January, 3pm, Sanders Theatre, Cambridge
- Beethoven's Piano Concerto No. 2, *Ah! perfido*, Op. 65, Symphony No. 5; Haydn's *Scena de Berenice*, 4–5 March, 8pm, NEC's Jordan Hall, Boston
- Mozart's *Die Zauberflöte* (sung in German with English dialogue), 15–16 April, 7.30pm, NEC's Jordan Hall, Boston

HANDEL HOUSE MUSEUM GETS A REVAMP


HANDEL'S HOUSE. 1725.
57, Lower Brook Street, Hanover Square.
Here Handel lived for 34 years; from 1725 to his death in 1759.
Here he composed The Messiah and other works.
See Callcott's Handel Album.
Published by C. Lonsdale, 26, Old Bond Street

A 19th-century depiction of Handel's house

The Handel House Museum has recently rebranded to Handel and Hendrix in London in what it describes as 'an exciting time'.

With the name change comes the public opening of the Hendrix Flat at 23 Brook Street, just next door to Handel's house at number 25 and a place the guitarist called his 'first real home'. The museum will continue explorations into George Frideric Handel's life in 18th-century London.

Advanced booking to visit the Hendrix Flat opened on 2 November.

www.handelhouse.org

EMA EARLY MUSIC MONTH 2016

March 2016 brings us Early Music Month, a national grassroots campaign in the United States, sponsored by Early Music America to raise awareness of early music throughout the US.

With participation open to everyone, the month promises exciting prizes to be won, performances to see, and people to connect with from across the spectrum of early music.

In homage of the coming March festivities, Early Music America are inviting everyone to register online to be included in their list of partners, as well as offering help promoting events on their website and social media.

Should you have an event in March, dedicate it to Early Music Month to provide newcomers and old loyals alike the opportunity to connect with you. Registering enables you to use web graphics to market affiliated performances on social media and your website, as well as having access to print resources to help spread the word.

early music MONTH 2016

EARLY MUSIC MONTH GIVEAWAY WIN EITHER $500 OR $250!

- Dedicate one March performance to Early Music Month, including a half-page programme insert or logo in your programme or promotional materials
- Promote the month on social media with the hashtag #EarlyMusicMonth2016 and the logo, or share some of your early music photos, captioning what early music means to you
- Post a video on YouTube, 2–3 minutes in length, about what early music means to you, or share a short performance video, using the hashtag #EarlyMusicMonth2016 and including the logo in your video

You must register online before entering into the giveaway; this can be done at www.earlymusicamerica.org/endeavors/early-music-month

BOSTON EARLY MUSIC FESTIVAL BEGINS WITH A BANG

Orlando Consort

Kicking off on 2 October at First Church in Cambridge, MA, the Boston Early Music Festival featured soprano Emma Kirkby and lutenist Jakob Lindberg at the start of what promises to be a fantastic 2015–16 season. Following these celebrations were BEMF debutants Solamente Naturali on 16 October, providing an explosion of energy their 17th- and 18th-century folk and dance music that 'burst with rhythmic virtuosity and vibrant enthusiasm'.

Harvard University's Paine Hall was the backdrop of the star-studded concert on 9 November, with Grammy Award-winning mezzo-soprano Anne Sofie von Otter and music by Purcell, Dowland and Monteverdi.

Still to come is the BEMF Chamber Opera Series with a revival of their 2009 production of Handel's *Acis and Galatea* on 28–29 November in what will Thanksgiving celebration of early music. This rendition of Handel's revered work previously sold out in Boston and on tour across North America and is soon to be released on CD.

Having recently performed their 2000th concert, the Tallis Scholars return to BEMF for the 27th time on 12 December at St Paul Church in Cambridge, MA, with director Peter Phillips, featuring music by John Sheppard, Arvo Pärt and Tallis.

12 February brings the Orlando Consort, one of Europe's most inventive ensembles, returning to BEMF with a dedication to Guillaume de Machaut.

BEMF will draw to a glitzy close with William Christie and Les Arts Florissants. Taking place on 24 April this concert promises to sate all early music lovers' needs until the next season arrives.

A BREAKDOWN OF THE COMING SEASON…

- **BEMF Chamber Opera Series** present Handel's *Acis and Galatea*, 28 November, 8pm; 29 November, 3pm, NEC's Jordan Hall, Boston
- **The Tallis Scholars** with director Peter Phillips, performing music by John Sheppard, Arvo Pärt and Tallis, 12 December, 8pm, St. Paul Church, Cambridge
- **Paul O'Dette and Ronn McFarlane** in an exploration of virtuoso lute duets, 16 January, 8pm, First Church in Cambridge, Congregational
- **Orlando Consort** with a programme dedicated to Guillaume de Machaut, 12 February, 8pm, First Church in Cambridge, Congregational
- **Jordi Savall** performing a viol recital, 5 March, 8pm, St. Paul Church, Cambridge
- **Ton Koopman and Tini Mathot** performing of Bach, Soler and Mozart, 11 March, 8pm, First Church in Cambridge, Congregational
- **William Christie and Les Arts Florissants** close the season with 17th-century French court music, 24 April, 7.30pm, Sanders Theatre, Harvard University

Further information, including booking, can be found at www.bemf.org

GRAMOPHONE AWARDS 2015 WINNERS ANNOUNCED

The winners of the 2015 Gramophone Classical Music Awards were announced at a glittery event on 17 September in London's St John's Smith Square, with exclusive live performances and guest presenters including Gerald Finley, Sir Thomas Allen and James Ehnes.

'The voting process for this year's awards entailed a wonderfully enjoyable few months,' said James Jolly, Editor-in-Chief of *Gramophone*, who also commended 'magnificent artists caught in their absolute prime and an industry showing flair and imagination, unimpaired by the tough market conditions.'

Early music winners were:

- **Baroque Instrumental** – *J.S. Bach: Cello Suites*, David Watkin (Resonus)
- **Baroque Vocal** – *Monteverdi: Vespri solenni per la festa di San Marco*, Concerto Italiano, Rinaldo Alessandrini (Naïve)
- **Early Music** – *'The Spy's Choirbook'*, Alamire, English Cornett and Sackbut Ensemble, David Skinner (Obsidian)
- **Instrumental** – *Bach: English Suites Nos 1, 3 & 5*, Piotr Anderszewski (Warner Classics)
- **Recital** – *A French Baroque Diva*, Carolyn Sampson (sop), Ex Cathedra, Jeffrey Skidmore (Hyperion)

Carolyn Sampson

CAMBRIDGE EARLY MUSIC ANNOUNCES NEW SEASON

With Magnificat bringing to life Girolamo Savonarola's 15th-century Dominican compositions at the Emmanuel United Reformed Church and VOCES8 returning with Bach motets, there's much to look forward to from Cambridge Early Music in the 2015–16 season:

- Joglaresa: Sing We Yule!, Great St Mary's Church, 18 December, 7.30pm
- Magnificat, Philip Cave: Scattered Ashes, Emmanuel United Reformed Church, 26 February, 7.30pm
- Christophe Coin and Richard Boothby: L'Entente Cordiale, St Bene't's Church, 19 March, 7.30pm
- Faye Newton (soprano), Pamela Thorby (recorder), Susanna Pell (viol), Jacob Heringman (lute): Venus and the Lute Player, The Fitzwilliam Museum, 30 April, 7.15pm (pre-concert drinks at 6.45pm)
- Vox Luminis: Light and Shadow: Music at the time of Elizabeth I, St John's College Chapel, 12 May, 8pm
- The Gesualdo Six: Old and New – Monteverdi, Gesualdo and Ligeti, St Bene't's Church, 13 May, 1pm
- VOCES8: Bach Motets, Trinity College Chapel, 13 May, 7.30pm
- Three Medieval Tenors: Conductus – The forgotten song of the Middle Ages, Little St Mary's Church, 14 May, 3.30pm
- The Choir of St John's College: Cantata Evensong, St John's College Chapel, 14 May, 6.30pm
- VOCES8: Lassus *Sacræ Lectiones ex Propheta Job*, Jesus College Chapel, 15 May, 1pm
- James Gilchrist and Anna Tilbrook: A Celebration of Goethe, Howard Theatre, Downing College, 15 May, 7.30pm
- The Society of Strange and Ancient Instruments: Sound House, Wesley Methodist Church, 25 June, 7.30pm

VOCES8

To book, visit www.cambridgeearlymusic.org or telephone 0333 666 3366

VIVALDI'S 'THE FOUR SEASONS' RECORDED IN AID OF STRATFORD CANCER AND EYE HOSPITAL APPEAL

The Orchestra of the Swan have made a live recording of Vivaldi's *The Four Seasons* in aid of the Stratford Cancer and Eye Hospital Appeal at Alscot Park, Warwickshire. Virtuoso soloist David le Page joined the chamber orchestra for the performance, which was sponsored by 15 local businesses, many of which are part of the crowdfunding community Supporting Stratford.

Alscot Park hosted the Orchestra of the Swan

The new Stratford Hospital, which will provide patients with eye and cancer care, will be receiving all of the proceeds in an Appeal that shall be working towards a final goal of £1 million to make the hospital a Centre of Excellence in the United Kingdom.

'I had the idea for this CD after listening to David Le Page with the Orchestra of the Swan, which was an amazing experience,' says Chairman of the Stratford Hospital Appeal Denys C. Shortt OBE. 'I am so grateful to these local businesses who have made this CD recording possible. Their help means that one hundred percent of the sale proceeds of the CD will be donated to the Stratford Hospital Appeal.'

The CD will be available for purchase on 12 December.

www.orchestraoftheswan.org, www.supportingstratford.co.uk

TALLIS SCHOLARS SOAR TO NUMBER ONE FOR THE THIRD TIME IN A ROW

In a first in the history of the Classical Charts, the Tallis Scholars' recording of John Taverner's *Miss Corona Spinea* is the group's third consecutive album to reach number one in the UK Specialist Classical Chart.

'Even the most diehard of the Tallis Scholars' supporters who thought they'd heard everything by now will be bowled over by this astonishing performance of an astonishing work,' said Andrew Green (*EMT*, September–November 2015), with *The Observer*'s Stephen Pritchard describing the album as 'one of the repertoire's most challenging works'.

Their November 2013 recording of Taverner's *Miss Gloria tibi Trinitas* remained at number one for six weeks, while their March 2015 tribute to Arvo Pärt, *Tintinnabuli*, held the top spot for two weeks.

www.thetallischolars.co.uk

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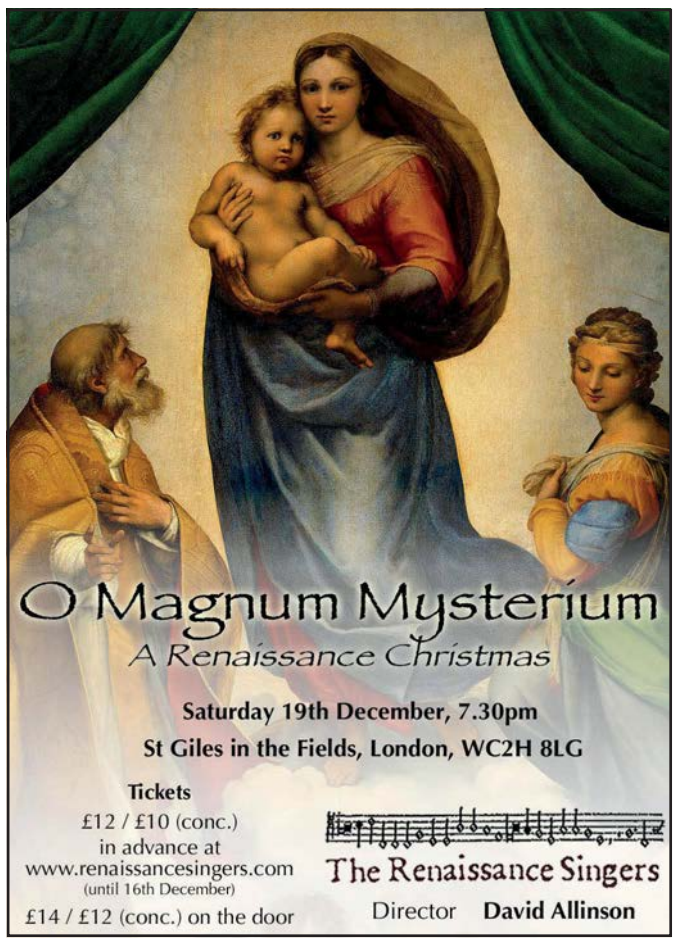


The Rondo Viol Academy

Alison Kinder and Jacqui Robertson-Wade

In 2011 viol teachers and players Alison Kinder and Jacqui Robertson-Wade founded the Rondo Viol Academy, running six courses a year for adults in conference centres in Derbyshire, Hertfordshire and Leicestershire. The Academy exists to provide teaching material and coaching for viol players of all abilities. Though modern instruments have books of graded repertoire for both soloists and ensembles, viol players can often find searching for suitable repertoire difficult.

Our courses are available at different levels and we choose the music carefully to ensure the comfort and challenges that should come with learning, without being insurmountable. The Academy is linked to Rondo Publishing, which produces books of repertoire at different levels so players can find the level that suits them and work their way through the stages.

Founded by Jacqui in 2005, it started with a publication at the heart of viol education, *Viol Player Book 1*. The *Viol Player* series is now an internationally acclaimed tutor for treble, tenor and bass viols, with play-along CDs aimed at children or the young at heart. Celebrating its 10th birthday this year, Rondo has published over a hundred titles including collections of consort music at different levels, edited by Jacqui, Andrew Fowler and Alison Crum.

RVA courses have a keen focus on technique – not just being able to play lots of notes, but being able to play them well! Music is selected depending on the standard and theme, and our course this November at Hayes Conference Centre in Derbyshire is called 'Carnival of the Animals', with set repertoire including 'The Nightingale' by Brade and 'Compel the Hawk to Sit' by Byrd, which includes the opportunity for students to sing if they wish.

Feedback from students is an important part of enabling us to tweak the course detail. 'We thoroughly enjoyed it, and learnt a great deal from both you and the other players ... we will recommend the weekend in the highest terms to the other members of our consort,' said one student. 'It was beautifully organised, we all seemed to get on well and I enjoyed the choice of music,' said another, with a final adding, 'The course was brilliant as always – it works as if by clockwork, but that is a tribute to the extraordinary hard work that you both put into it. These weekends are a highlight of our calendar!'

www.rondoviolacademy.co.uk

2016 COURSES

ELEMENTARY
5–7 February
The Hayes Conference Centre, Derbyshire
16–18 September
The Hayes Conference Centre, Derbyshire

INTERMEDIATE
15–17 April
High Leigh Conference Centre, Hertfordshire
4–6 November
Hothorope Hall, Leicestershire

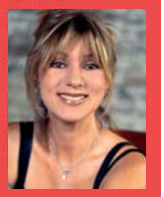
UPPER INTERMEDIATE
20–22 May
Hothorope Hall, Leicestershire
4–6 November
Hothorope Hall, Leicestershire

PRE-FORMED CONSORTS
Groups at any level with your own repertoire.
5–7 February
The Hayes Conference Centre, Derbyshire
16–18 September
The Hayes Conference Centre, Derbyshire

Tutors: Alison Kinder and Jacqui Robertson-Wade

Radio Notes

Pack your suitcases and join ***Lucie Skeaping*** *as she explores pickings from Leipzig to Naples, Philadelphia to Venice . . .*



'In winter's tedious nights sit by the fire with good old folks and let them tell thee tales of long ago,' wrote Shakespeare in *Richard II*. Alternatively, turn up the thermostat, switch on to BBC Radio 3 and wallow in an hour of old music.

Our December–February offerings are full of variety. If you're not yet familiar with the Philadelphia-based band Tempesta di Mare, grab the opportunity to hear them on 10 January; critics have been raving about their 'energy' and 'off-the-grid chic factor' in performances of baroque repertoire ranging from staged opera to chamber music. We'll hear examples of their recent collaboration with soprano Julianne Baird about Leipzig's famous Café Zimmermann, which hosted concerts given by a healthy mix of students, amateurs and professionals for whom Bach penned some of his most exuberant pieces (no doubt over a large cappuccino!). There'll also be excerpts from their Italian repertoire – the musical world of Venice and Naples. But it's their latest venture – the most expansive in their 19-year history – which takes centre stage: 'Comédie & Tragédie', exploring French musical theatre in works by Lully, Charpentier, Marais and Rebel. In a marketplace dominated by Euro-ensembles, the Tempestas are the sole American group to record for the prestigious British Chandos label. 'The music just pops off the page,' says co-founder Robert Stone; 'you take it as your own, play with it and have fun.' Count me in.

Leipzig also gets a mention a few weeks earlier on 6 December when we meet the Swedish composer Gustaf Düben. His grandfather was an organist at the city's Thomaskirche (keeping the seat warm for Bach more than a century later) but Gustaf spent his own career in his native land, working in Stockholm's Royal Court Orchestra and producing a compelling array of sacred works, instrumental music and arias. All pretty straightforward perhaps, but it's the so-called 'Düben Collection' that really put him on the map. This huge compendium of manuscripts from all over Europe is packed with favourites from the court of the endearingly unconventional Queen Christina. A large part of it is French but there's English, Polish, Italian and Swedish music too – and, most importantly, among the more than 2,000 pieces in the collection are the only existing examples of certain works by Dieterich Buxtehude.

Everyone loves the Tudors and on 26 February I've invited my old friend Sally Dunkley to talk about one of her passions: composer John Sheppard. She's recently made new editions of his music, which should bring him back into the limelight. Oh, and get the turkey basted in good time for our Christmas Eve offering which is still under wraps at time of writing!

Follow Lucie on Twitter (@lucieskeaping) to keep up with the latest news from the Early Music Show; *www.bbc.co.uk/radio3/earlymusicshow. All broadcast details correct at the time of press.*

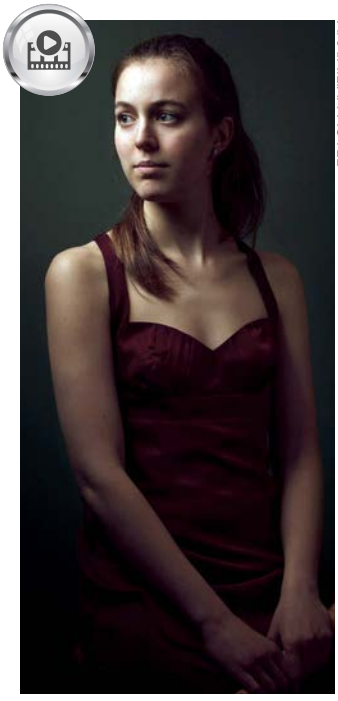
UP& COMING

TABEA DEBUS

Many tell of their experiences unwittingly ending up in group recorder lessons at a tender age, but somehow very few end their stories as masters of the instrument. Tabea Debus, 24, who studied recorder and baroque cello at the Guildhall School of Music & Drama and then at the Frankfurt Academy of Music, tells me how she stumbled into the career. 'I started recorder when I was about six like everyone does, with another boy who basically needed someone to play with, and we ended up having a lot of fun.' Currently completing her Master's at the Royal Academy of Music under Pamela Thorby, Tabea is already an award-winning performer in Germany, and now has been awarded a hotly contested place on the St John's Smith Square Young Artists Scheme for the 2015–16 season.

Along with support in marketing and outreach projects, an important part of being a Young Artist at St John's is the commissioning of new work – an opportunity which excites all recorder enthusiasts. As Tabea points out to me, there are almost infinite possibilities and many difficult and delicate decisions to be made, but in any case we can expect a valuable new addition to the recorder repertory. And if that isn't enough to look forward to, her new recording, 'Cantata per Flauto' is expected soon.

With the invaluable support of the department of Historical Performance at the RAM and the inspirational teaching of Pamela Thorby, Tabea is joining a new generation of recorder pioneers on a mission to bring their instrument out into the spotlight on the world stage. 'I really want to show how versatile the instrument is; all the different kinds there are and the different styles it can play in.'



MAXIMILIAN MOTEL

This means reaching a new audience with fresh ideas. 'The audiences have changed since Frans Brüggen, so we need to find new forms of performing to bring the new generation into the concert halls.' She seems to be achieving just that with her wonderfully varied upcoming concerts at St John's, which includes *There is only one Bach…?* and *Points of Contact*, from which we can expect everything from the Renaissance to the freshly penned.

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COMPETITIONS

Keep up to date with the latest winners and deadlines of early music competitions across the globe

RESULTS

INTERNATIONAL SINGING COMPETITION FOR BAROQUE OPERA 'PIETRO ANTONIO CESTI'

French mezzo-soprano Anthea Pichanick, 29, was chosen as the winner of the 6th International Singing Competition for Baroque Opera 'Pietro Antonio Cesti', held as part of the Innsbruck Festival of Early Music. As well as walking away with a €4,000 cheque, Pichanick – a student of Montserrat Caballé – was also awarded the Resonanzen prize, which comes with the promise of a performance at the Konzerthaus in Vienna as part of the Resonanzen early music festival. Second and third prizes were awarded to Ukrainian countertenor Konstantin Derri and Italian soprano Alice Rossi respectively, while the latter's compatriot soprano Arianna Venditelli was the winner of the audience prize.

Alessandro De Marchi, artistic director of the Innsbruck Festival of Early Music, remarked that 'the jury's decision has never been more difficult, as the artistic quality of the competition was extremely high and the candidates' performances were all of a similarly high level.' His comments were echoed by Sebastian Schwarz, the chair of the competition jury, who praised the 'tremendously balanced performance level of the competitors … there were considerably more high quality performances among the singers than in last year's competition.'

ANDREA HADRINGER

Prima donna: Anthea Pichanick

ANDREA HADRINGER

Alice Rossi receiving her prize from the Innsbruck jury

UPCOMING DEADLINES

NCEM YOUNG COMPOSERS AWARD 2016

Details The National Centre for Early Music is teaming up with BBC Radio 3 for the Young Composers Award 2016 in partnership with Theatre of the Ayre, directed by lutenist Elizabeth Kenny. Composers are invited to create a contemporary response to the Renaissance lute song, for either male or female voice; the collaborating singers are mezzo-soprano Clare Wilkinson and tenor Nicholas Mulroy.
Eligibility Open to young composers resident in the UK up to the age of 25, divided into two categories: 18 years and under, and 19 to 25 years.
Deadline Applicants must register their interest by 5pm on 19 February 2016; completed scores must be received no later than 5pm on 18 March 2016.
Competition dates The Award will be judged on 12 May 2016, following performances of shortlisted entries during the day.
Location National Centre for Early Music, York.
Prizes A performance by the Theatre of the Ayre of the winning compositions, which will be recorded for broadcast by the Early Music Show on BBC Radio 3.
Contact education@ncem.co.uk
Web www.ncem.co.uk

EARLY MUSIC AMERICA'S MEDIEVAL AND RENAISSANCE COMPETITION 2016

Details The competition will showcase some of the brightest up-and-coming North American performers of music from between 1000 and 1600.
Eligibility Applicants must be ensembles (minimum two people) formed less than five years ago, limited to repertoire of the medieval and Renaissance periods, with an average age of 35. Performers must be members of Early Music America, and must reside in the US or Canada.
Deadline 15 April 2016.
Competition dates 1 October 2016.
Location Peabody Conservatory, Baltimore, Maryland, USA.
Prizes First prize – US$2,500 plus engagements across the US in the 2017–18 or 2018–19 season; media coverage, PR coaching, broadcast opportunities. Second prize – US$1,500. Audience prize – US$500.
Contact info@earlymusicamerica.org
Web www.earlymusicamerica.org

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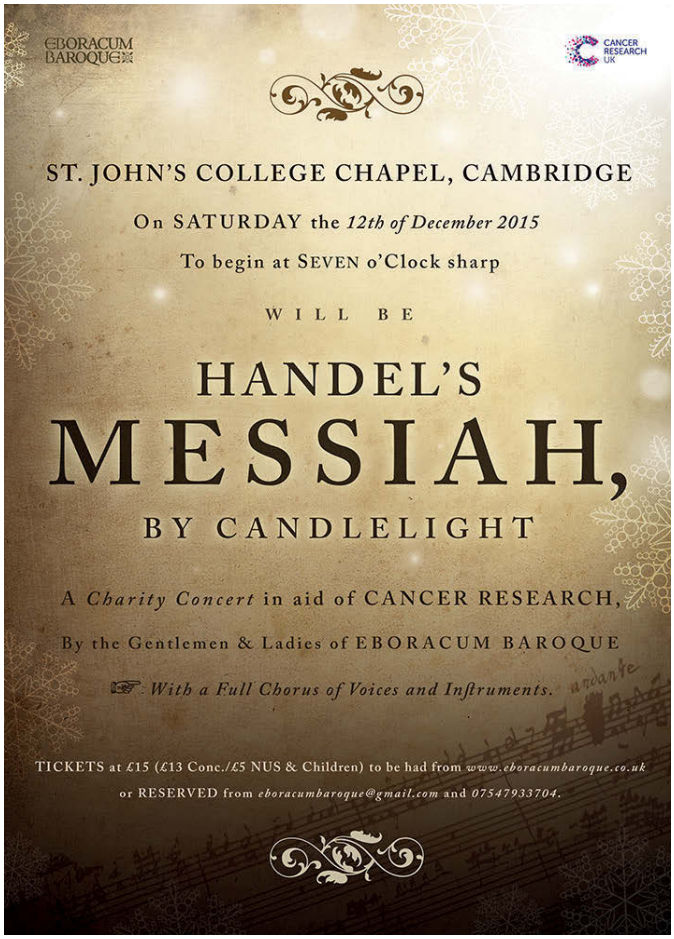
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DAVID WATKIN

RESONUS LIMITED

Placing music within its context has always been hugely important to David Watkin: as a member of the Eroica Quartet, he made recordings in 'period style'; as a solo cellist, he performed Bach by the font at Eisenach where Bach was baptised.

But Watkin's most recent recording project, his interpretation of Bach's six cello suites, presented him with a hard decision. 'For a long time I didn't want to make a "definitive version"– I wanted to continue to update my thoughts. Then Resonus Classics asked me about the Bach and I realised I shouldn't be afraid: I've been playing the suites for 40 years!'

Watkin's recording was his first release on Resonus but his last as a cellist; the onset of scleroderma meant that he had to stop playing in 2014, but as he says, 'I've always been a musician first and a cellist second.' It is this musicianship that has energised Watkin and given him a passion for the world of historical performance. He has, for example, organised sessions of live music and baroque dance to appreciate 'the embodiment or feel of the music. It's like trying to teach someone in a salsa band', he explains. 'You first have to know how the rhythms feel in order to dance.'

Although he talks of his relationship with Bach's music over the years as 'growing in an organic way, in fits and starts,' it is clear that a number of things have maintained his constant interest. 'Hearing Anner Bylsma's recording of the Suites made me want to buy a baroque cello, and as a stroppy teenager, I was completely obsessed with Bach. Then when I went to Cambridge, I met John Butt who was doing his PhD research into articulation in Bach's music.' Taking part in John Eliot Gardiner's Bach cantata pilgrimage, Watkin had the opportunity to try out a copy of a five-string cello by the Amati brothers, the original of which is currently housed in the Royal Academy of Music museum, on loan from the Fleming Trust.

Watkin was given permission to use the original Amati to record the sixth suite. It is the only known example of this specific form of instrument from the Cremona workshops, dates from around 1605 and belonged to Amaryllis Fleming, one of Watkin's former teachers. Until she bought it at auction it was an unrecognised 'old English' small four-stringed instrument, with a fifth peg hole blanked off, but it was eventually re-attributed and restored. As Watkin explains, 'the Amati is unusual in that it is kept in playable condition, but it is impossible to tell what kind of set-up it would have had originally.' Bach writes for such a cello in only in a handful of cantatas and the sixth suite, but Watkin feels the benefits of its more sympathetic resonance and new timbres. 'The Prelude, for example, needs the five strings for it to work organically.'

Using the Amati was 'a bit tricky logistically, as I'm based in Scotland. But whenever I was in London I would pop in and practise for a couple of hours – and it is in great working order. When it came to making the recording, I was able to take it away for a couple of weeks.' For the other five suites, Watkin used a Rugieri cello, made in Cremona around 1670, 'perhaps even from the same piece of wood as the Amati.' Choosing the right venue for the recording was another important decision: 'I wanted a building with lots of wood – stone surroundings give you a completely different acoustic,' he explains. 'The Robin Chapel in Edinburgh was ideal.'

Watkin is careful to point out that although recording the suites was an important project, 'seen next to Bach's great output they are just one little line in Grove's worklist, six little dance suites…! For me it was about getting deep into what they are about, but without losing that perspective either.'

CORIANDER STUTTARD

A longer version of this article originally appeared in the Rhinegold Strings Supplement 2015.

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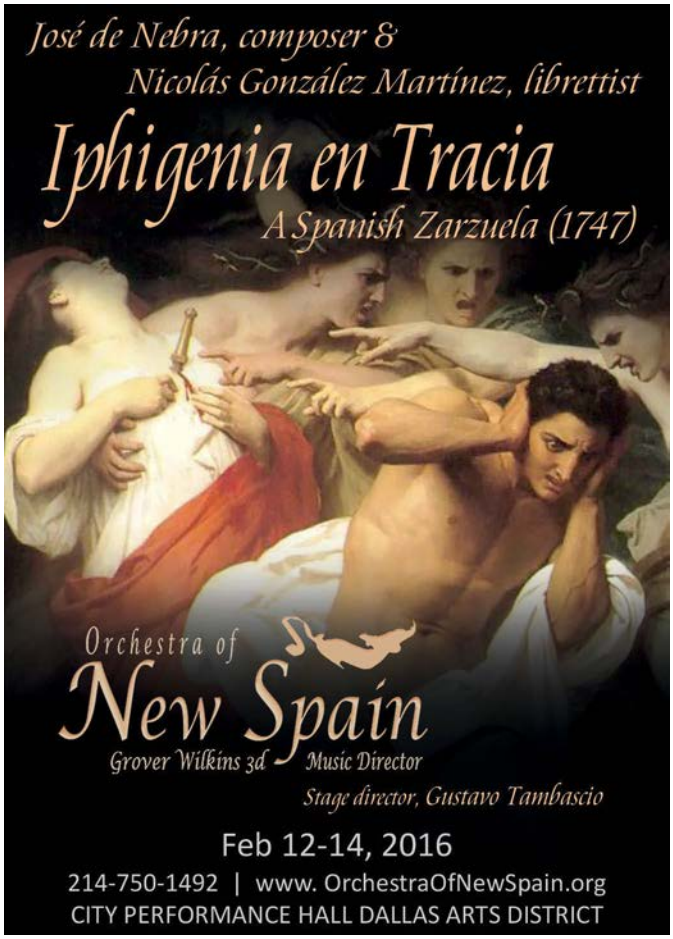

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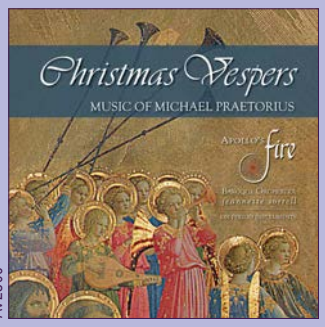
EARLY MUSIC REVIEW



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LETTER FROM ABROAD

HONG KONG

Dear *EMT*,

I am very happy to introduce my new early music vocal ensemble Tallis Vocalis. First, here's how it all began.

I have been singing in and managing choirs my whole life, but the early music repertoire did not feature until fairly recently. My first experience with early music came at the University of Hong Kong in 1995 when a young researcher called Michael Noone, professor of music at Boston College and founder of Ensemble Plus Ultra, formed a small group to sing Renaissance music. I had never sung anything like it before and it piqued my interest. A search in the university's music library led me to the Tallis Scholars' historic recording of Allegri's *Miserere*. Listening to this for the first time was like the doors to heaven opening up and I couldn't imagine anything else – in music or singing – that could compare. Renaissance vocal music instantly became my favourite.

After I graduated, I chaired the Hong Kong Bach Choir for ten years. Managing a 100-person chorus meant I rarely got the chance to programme or sing Renaissance works, so for a long while I had to put this passion aside. This love was finally reignited a few years ago when, stationed in London, I was able to attend several excellent concerts by Stile Antico, the Sixteen, and, of course, the Tallis Scholars. When I returned to Hong Kong, I decided to turn my dream into a reality.

In 2013, I formed Tallis Vocalis with Sandy Ho, who worked with me in the Bach Choir. Tallis Vocalis is the first local vocal ensemble dedicated to the performance of Renaissance vocal music, and has 24 singers from different backgrounds and nationalities.

Things got off to an exciting start for us when, in 2014 the Tallis Scholars were in town to perform. We managed to organise a workshop with Peter Phillips who showed us the ropes and gave our group name his seal of approval!

Our inaugural concerts took place in late 2014 in Hong Kong and Macau in a programme of English renaissance music by Tallis, Byrd and Sheppard, conducted by Andrew Griffiths of Stile Antico. Our following concert was conducted by Christopher Watson, a regular tenor in the Tallis Scholars; we sang Victoria's Requiem, interspersed with contemporary works by Tavener, MacMillan and Pärt. We will work with another British conductor, Nicholas Cleobury, in April 2016 in an Easter programme which includes music by Browne, Taverner, Tallis, Byrd, Gibbons, Lotti, and Allegri and MacMillan's *Misereres*.

The early music scene in Hong Kong is perhaps not (yet) as vibrant as that of other musical genres, but there exists a real interest and a growing local demand. There are several local groups who perform regularly: the Early Music Society of Hong Kong and Concerto da Camera who specialise in performing with period instruments, and L'Artiste who perform in a variety of formats, including recorder and Baroque chamber ensembles. The Hong Kong Academy for Performing Arts has a collection of period instruments for students to perform with, and also offers elective studies in particular period instruments. In terms of vocal works, the baroque repertoire (Bach, Handel, Vivaldi) is a well-trodden path by many choral groups, but the earlier repertoire less so.

The early music scene in Hong Kong is perhaps not as vibrant as that of other musical genres, but there exists a real interest and a growing local demand

We therefore hope that Tallis Vocalis will continue to show local audiences the hidden treasures and true splendour of Renaissance vocal music.

RAYMOND CHOI
Founder and Chairman of Tallis Vocalis; www.tallisvocalis.com

Raymond Choi with Tallis Vocalis

Baroque cello

Player and teacher of the baroque cello ***Alison McGillivray*** *shares her knowledge of the instrument and suggests how to start out*

WHY CHOOSE THE BAROQUE CELLO?

If you've read this far, then I'm assuming you might be a cellist, and that you're probably used to playing on metal strings with a beautifully concave bow, excellent for spinning long singing lines. You're probably also used to playing in tune with a piano, and consider semi-tones to be created equal. So what might attract you to an instrument with a distinctly 18th-century accent?

GUT STRINGS!

The quality of a good gut string is warm and flexible; it can produce strength and lively attack, as Johann Joachim Quantz knew when he wrote in 1752, 'the violoncellist must strive to draw a full, round, and virile tone from his instrument.' I am fan of the set-up where the top three strings are plain gut (yes, giving a G over 2mm thick), and a C with a gut core wound with silver. I love the bassy-ness this gives, and the way the thickness of the gut G pushes me into using my bow very differently.

If played with an unaltered metal-string technique, guts can sound awful. Gut strings ask for a different kind of handling, one where the bow is in movement before reaching the string and the gesture is prepared in the whole body and arm, early. This means, crucially, that the shapes are created first in the air, and then reach the string, where they can be heard and felt.

GESTURE AND THE BOW

A stick that is straight, or, when under tension, a little concave, lives on the string in a very different way to a convex stick. It invites more gesture and inequality. With an early bow in my hand, I am much more likely to dance than sing. The down-bows become stronger, up-bows lighter. This helps in creating an interesting path through the beats of a bar.

A good gut string is warm and flexible; it can produce strength and lively attack

My first experience of unequal temperament was as a student, playing Monteverdi: I shared the bass line with a viola da gamba player, and was captivated by playing to match the placement of her frets, which she'd tuned to meantone.

The jist of meantone is that home keys feel consonant, beautifully in tune, and that remote keys feel jangly, uncomfortable. It ramps up the interplay between tension and release.

TO SPIKE OR NOT?

The early treatises broadly agree: find an appropriate chair, don't sit too far back. Bow in right hand, cello in left. Hold the cello between your calves, twist it to the right to bring the front edge of the instrument to your right calf, and the back edge to your left calf. Lean the cello a little to the left. Feet on the ground, left foot more in front.

In pictures however, you'll see a huge variety of solutions; cellists standing, using stools, straps, holding it on their feet. Often it was a question of available space or where the score was.

BASS THOUGHTS

Most importantly, as a baroque cellist you'll need to grow yourself into a useful bass line player. Quantz says that the violoncellist 'is in an advantageous position to help the other parts in the expression of light and shadow, and can give vigour to the whole piece. In preserving the correct tempo in a piece, and the proper degree of liveliness, in expressing the Piano and Forte at the appropriate time, in distinguishing and making recognisable the different passions that should be aroused … the violoncellist is very important.'

As a bass line player, you'll learn to embody the harmonic structure of the piece, the rhythmic intention of the music, and the affect, the 'passions'. And of course you'll need to become a great accompanist! I'll give the last word to Quantz:

'Solo playing upon this instrument is not easy … Anyone who practises the cello as an amateur is free to do whatever gives him greatest pleasure, but somebody who intends to make it his profession will do well to apply himself above all else to becoming a good accompanist … But the art of accompanying well cannot be learned either by oneself or by playing only in large ensembles. Anyone who wishes to give himself a secure foundation must accompany many able individuals … There are no born masters, and one person must always learn from another.'

www.alisonmcgillivray.com

FURTHER READING

- **Michel Corrette** *Méthode théoretique et pratique pour apprendre en peu de temps le violoncelle dans sa perfection, op. 24, Paris, 1741*: the first published cello treatise
- **Johann Joachim Quantz** *On Playing the Flute, 1752, Chapter XVII: Of the Duties of Those who Accompany a Concertante Part, Section IV, Of the Violoncellist in Particular*: a surprising, informative and entertaining read
- **Valerie Walden** *One Hundred Years of Violoncello - A History of Technique and Performance Practice, 1740-1840 (Cambridge University Press)*: an excellent, informative history book

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FESTIVALS PREVIEW

ST JOHN'S SMITH SQUARE, YORK, TEMPLE, SPITALFIELDS

St John's Smith Square

MATTHEW ANDREWS

The **Christmas Festival at St John's Smith Square**, directed by Stephen Layton, is celebrating its 30th birthday this December. As it happens, so am I – but unlike this journalist, the festival has matured into a sophisticated blend of refined distinction and seasoned cosmopolitanism. The core of its remit remains unchanged, celebrating and showcasing the British choral tradition at the time of year when its glory shines brightest and spreads furthest. Fourteen concerts over a fortnight reflect choral activity accompanied and unaccompanied, ancient and modern.

The choir of King's College London will kick off the festival with Leighton, Carver and Tallis's *Spem in alium* under new director Joseph Fort. Stephen Layton's own choir Polyphony will conclude it in its usual storming fashion with its now-trademark annual *Messiah*; this event, like many Christmas Festival performances, often sells out and you would be well advised to book in advance.

Oxbridge chapel choirs, as usual, have a strong presence and a special contribution. The choir of Christ Church Cathedral, Oxford offers a programme of Christmas favourites in the Holst-Walton-Britten vein, introduced informatively and entertainingly by Howard Goodall. Merton, Oxford commemorated the College's 750th year in 2014 with a series of choral commissions contributing to the Merton Choirbook project; its fine young choir in such appetising new repertoire as Rihards Dubra's *O Radix Jesse* and Matthew Martin's *O Oriens* will be a real treat. The choir of Trinity College, Cambridge is joined by the Orchestra of the Age of Enlightenment for Bach's Mass in B minor.

Other 'early' treats on offer include a delicious programme of Christmas music written following the union of Mary Tudor and Philip of Spain in 1554 – often with the joint choirs of the Chapel Royal and the Capella Flamenca in mind – performed by Chapelle du Roi; Byrd, Victoria and Prætorius from Ensemble Plus Ultra; a selection of Sheppard and Tallis combined with Pärt from the Tallis Scholars, and Schelle, Kuhnau and Bach reflecting an early 1720s Christmas in Leipzig from Solomon's Knot.

Additionally, rising choir Siglo de Oro makes its Smith Square debut, and Ex Cathedra returns with its much-loved annual Christmas Music by Candlelight. Thomas Trotter offers an organ recital featuring Bach, Mozart, Schumann, Prokofiev and Liszt, and the National Youth Music Theatre presents a concert of seasonal readings, music and staged extracts.

Choral music is also at the heart of **Temple Winter Festival**'s output, with a striking variety of music on offer over the course of the week, ranging from Stile Antico's *A Wondrous Mystery* programme of Prætorius, Clemens non Papa, Eccard, Gallus, Hassler and Lassus, to a evening with the London Community Gospel Choir in which 'invigorating choreography' is promised. The Cardinall's Musick's *Puer Natus Est* programme is all-Tallis and includes the plangent *Absterge Domine* as well as such well-loved favourites as *If ye love me*. New kids on the block Eo Nomine, formed on the Genesis

Sixteen training programme, offer a concert entitled *Scent from Above*, with Guerrero *Trahe me post te* and *Quasi cedrus* and Sweelinck *Hodie Christus natus est*. Nordic Europe is in the limelight twice, with the Temple Church's associate organist Greg Morris carving a path from Buxtehude to Nielsen in a solo organ recital and subsequently aiding and abetting the Temple Church Choir and Director of Music Roger Sayer in a Rautavaara- and Pärt-based concert entitled *Northern Lights: Music for a Nordic Christmas*.

Further north, the **York Early Music Christmas Festival** has a particularly intriguing offering from Clare Wilkinson and friends, in which mezzo-soprano, lutes, cornett, harp and reader together imagine the musical Christmas that Martin Luther spent at home in 1538, in which Latin motets and vernacular songs (perhaps including his own *Vom Himmel hoch*) were sung and a consort of musicians was formed after dinner, rendering Luther 'joyful at table'. Chamber ensemble L'Arcadia make compelling cases for Telemann, Fasch and Graupner in an exploration of the contention for the post at the Thomaskirche Leipzig that was ultimately to be Bach's, before the Marian Consort follows the Christmas story through the eyes of the shepherds with Mouton's intricate, mesmerising motet *Quæramus cum pastoribus* and the York Waits mark the onset of winter with Prætorius and rommelpots (if you're not sure, look it up!). There's also Muffatt, Biber, Marcello and Telemann from the European Union Baroque Orchestra; European concertos from Les Contre-Sujets; Haydn's *Creation* from the Yorkshire Bach Choir and Baroque Soloists; Byrd, Gibbons, Tallis and Sheppard from Ex Cathedra; the deservedly popular *Sing We Yule!* Celtic programme from Joglaresa; and a traversal of festive Europe ending in 20th-century Latvia from B'Rock Orchestra, all mostly in the NCEM, St Margaret's Church.

Additionally, a workshop entitled *War and Peace*, for players of Renaissance instruments, will commemorate the 500th anniversary of the Battle of Marignano, when the forces of François I of France defeated Italian and Swiss armies. Music will include works by Janequin, Victoria, Guerrero, Susato, Lassus, Ferrabosco and Franck, and early booking is required. A stern injunction is issued to the effect that any cornetts, sackbuts and curtals in attendance must be well-behaved!

The **Spitalfields Music Winter Festival** also features the Marian Consort and B'Rock Orchestra programmes, along with Fretwork and Red Byrd in Gibbons, Dering and Ravenscroft; Les Arts Florissants in Monteverdi madrigals; the Aurora Orchestra in Hans Zender's instrumental adaptation of Schubert's *Winterreise*; the English Concert in Charpentier and Stradella; the Sixteen in Marian polyphony; and Solomon's Knot Baroque Collective's once-witnessed, never-forgotten rendering of Bach *Christmas Oratorio* from memory and without a conductor.

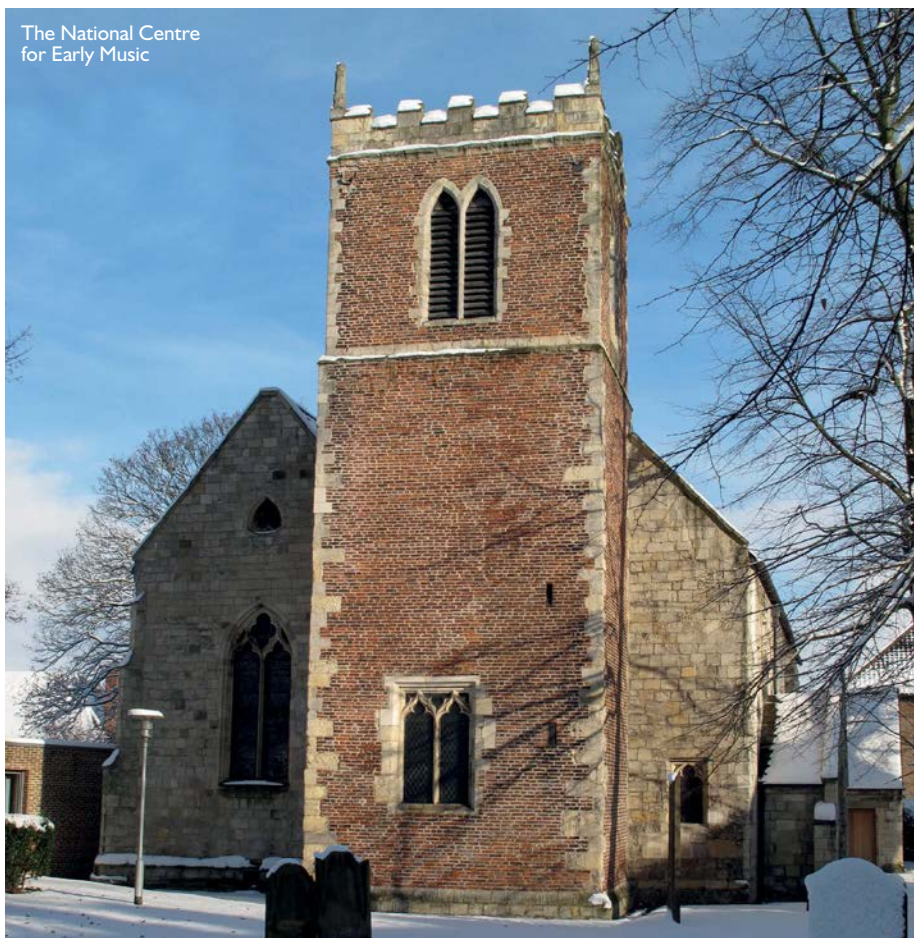
Several premieres are on offer in Spitalfields, too, with the Disappearing Dining Club presenting a three-course feast with a singer-songwriter and a gamba player on hand; screenings of *Death Actually* wherein Bach's motets are fused with pub music; the Choir of Royal Holloway in Baltic music (something of a trend this year, by all accounts); and The Riot Ensemble presenting new works by Serbian-Swedish and Spanish composers, all in addition to the ongoing Works in Progress events.

Young and very young audiences are addressed directly with the Musical Rumpus for babies and toddlers, Platform:Upbeat showcasing young jazz players and an interactive musical adventure entitled *Sound Explorers: Moon Man* for 5–7s.

Participatory events include *Rocking Chairs*, an installation by Dutch sound artists Strijbos & Van Rijswijk, the popular Spitalfields Sings vocal workshop and a walking tour of the Spitalfields area. There are also several pre-performance talks with speakers including author and ceramicist Edmund de Waal.

St John's Smith Square Christmas Festival *takes place 11–23 December (www.sjss.org.uk);* ***Temple Winter Festival*** *runs 14–18 December (www.templemusic.org);* ***York Early Music Christmas Festival*** *takes place 4–12 December (www.ncem.co.uk), and* ***Spitalfields Music Winter Festival*** *takes place 4–15 December (www.spitalfieldsmusic.org.uk).*

CATHERINE GROOM


The National Centre for Early Music

The well-tempered lute

***Žak Ozmo** delves into the fascinating life of Vincenzo Galilei, composer, lutenist and father of astronomer Galileo Galilei*

Žak Ozmo

With origin stories in both the Middle East and ancient Greece, the European lute was an instrument infused with the symbolism of the ancients. It was repeatedly at the centre of movements defining cultural and intellectual trends, particularly since the lute's, assumed link with the ancient Greek lyre or *kythara* made it a symbol of the lost knowledge of antiquity, both human and divine. Fittingly, its music merged the sound world of its time with philosophy, science, politics, literature, architecture and more, and it embodied universal mechanisms of human expression relatable even today.

While planning my latest CD recording, I sought a project that would truly reflect the instrument's remarkable heritage. Vincenzo Galilei's *Libro d'intavolatura di Liuto* (1584), with its 'well-tempered lute' sections, presented itself as a natural choice for detailed study. This fascinating collection, circulated 138 years before J.S. Bach's *Well-Tempered Clavier*, is the first substantial musical collection to champion the versatility of a well-tempered tuning system. Galilei's *Libro* demonstrated the ability of the lute to transpose sets of dances to any of the twelve degrees of an equally tempered scale, while using the two modes that most resemble the more modern notion of minor and major tonality: Dorian and Ionian.

Vincenzo Galilei (ca. 1520–1591) – in his time a highly-esteemed theorist, composer, lutenist and singer – is better known today as the father of the famous astronomer Galileo. In Vincenzo's early years he studied the lute and gained a considerable reputation as a performer. It was his talent on this instrument that attracted the interest of Giovanni de' Bardi, Count of Vernio, who in the late 1550s went on to sponsor Galilei's studies with Italian music theorist and composer Gioseffo Zarlino. In 1572 Galilei went to Florence and it was there, during his involvement with Bardi's Florentine Camerata (an influential group of humanists, musicians, poets and intellectuals who gathered at Bardi's house to discuss trends in the arts), that he broke off with Zarlino's teachings and really came into his own as a theorist and composer at the forefront of the humanist movement in music. Interestingly, it was Galilei's background as a performer-scholar that lead to a clash with his former teacher, as he realised that Zarlino's purely theoretical teachings could not stand the test of musical practice.

Galilei was arguably one of the Camerata's most prolific members, and his music experience continued to inform his theoretical writings. Working with colleagues at the core of the academy – in particular Girolamo Mei, Bardi, and Pietro Strozzi – he dedicated his professional life to unravelling the secrets of ancient Greek music and applying it to music-making in his own time. In a 1582 letter by Pietro Bardi, Galilei was regarded as 'this great genius' who 'saw that one of the principal goals of this academy [the Florentine Camerata] was by rediscovering ancient music, however much this was possible in such a dark area, to improve modern music …'

Indeed, Galilei's writings anticipated many of the principles today popularly associated with Claudio Monteverdi and *seconda prattica*. Particularly interesting in this regard is his 1588 treatise currently held in the Biblioteca Nazionale in Florence, in which he outlined and defended principles of this new practice 17 years before Monteverdi's note to his 'Studious Readers' appended to his fifth book of madrigals. Furthermore, Galilei was also 'the first to allow to be heard singing in dramatic style [in *stile rappresentativo*] … This innovation generated as much envy among a great part of the practitioners of music as it pleased those who were its true lovers.' It is interesting to note that the *stile rappresentativo* is today more popularly associated with Galilei's younger colleagues Jacopo Peri (1561–1633) and Giulio Caccini (1551–1618), who featured it in their operas almost two decades later.

Galilei's *Libro d'intavolatura di Liuto* was preceded by important theoretical treatises and other musical collections:

Intavolatura de Lauto (1563), a collection of vocal transcriptions and *ricercari* for the lute; *Fronimo* (1568), a treatise on the playing of the lute; *Primo libro di Madrigali a 4 a 5 voci* (1574), a collection of madrigals, and *Dialogo della musica antica et della moderna* (1581), which deals with tuning, monody, and a history of musical instruments.

The *Libro* was a truly revolutionary work, a product of his accumulated knowledge, insights and visionary ideas about the nature of music. There has been some uncertainty among both the lute scholars and performers as to whether the collection is intended for performance or if it is largely a theoretical work. This quandary has been greatly caused by the exceptional technical difficulty of the material, as the collection pushes technical and artistic capabilities of both the player and the instrument to their limits. Add to this numerous intellectual decisions that had to be made before the first notes could be played, and this remarkable collection intended for performance is a fitting testament to a great musical mind whose place in the pantheon of western musical history is long overdue.

Žak Ozmo's recording of Vincenzo Galilei's Libro d'intavolatura di Liuto *will be released by Hyperion in December 2015.*

Galilei's Della musica antica et della moderna (1581)

GALILEI TIMELINE

1520s
Galilei is born in Santa Maria a Monte, the Province of Pisa, Tuscany.

1562
Galilei returns to Florence and marries Giulia Ammanati of a noble local family, and settles down in Pisa.

1564
The first of Galilei's seven children, the future scientist Galileo, is born.

1572
Galilei moves from Pisa to Florence and starts his activities with the Florentine Camerata; his family joins him in 1574.

1574
Galilei publishes a collection of madrigals entitled *Primo libro di Madrigali a 4 a 5 voci*.

1578
Galilei's new experimental approach to music theory leads him to a conflict with his former teacher Zarlino, to whom he addresses a short discourse (now lost) outlining new theories regarding tuning and the modes.

1581
Galilei publishes *Dialogo della musica antica et della moderna*, a treatise which deals with tuning, monody and a history of musical instruments. The work includes critique of contrapuntal music, which Galilei condemned as incapable of achieving the mythical effects of ancient music. The first section of the *Dialogo* focuses on the points of disagreement with his former teacher Zarlino. Offended by Galilei's attack, Zarlino does not reply until his *Sopplimenti musicali* of 1588, leading to Galilei's answer in the *Discorso intorno all'opere di Messer Gioseffo Zarlino* (1589).

1584
Galilei compiles his *Libro d'intavolatura di Liuto*, a large collection of lute music that contains some of the works announced in *Fronimo*.

1588
Galilei writes his two-part treatise on counterpoint, in which he outlines many of the principles that will later become known as *seconda prattica*: *Il primo libro della prattica del contrapunto intorno all'uso delle consonanze* and *Discorso intorno all'uso delle dissonanze*.

c. 1560–1562
Galilei commences his theoretical studies with Zarlino in Venice. As a young man he studied the lute and became a reputable performer; it was his playing that attracted the attention of Giovanni de' Bardi, his principal patron, who eventually supported his studies with Zarlino.

1563
Galilei publishes *Intavolatura de Lauto* (1563), a collection of vocal transcriptions and *ricercari* for the lute.

1568
Galilei publishes *Fronimo,* a treatise on the playing of the lute in the form of a dialogue.

1572
Galilei initiates correspondence with Girolamo Mei, a Florentine historian and philologist residing in Rome. Mei's substantial insights into the ancient Greek writings about music, and especially his insistence that musical intervals must be determined by ear and not by mathematical formulas, contributed to Galilei turning from Zarlino's teachings.

1575
Another child of Galilei, the future lutenist Michelangelo, is born. Other children include son Benedetto and four daughters – Virginia and Livia marry and settle in Florence, but nothing is known of the other two girls.

1578–1579
Galilei enjoys the patronage of Duke Albrecht V of Bavaria.

1584
Galilei publishes the second edition of *Fronimo*, in which he announces the upcoming publication of transcriptions of more than 3,000 French, Spanish and Italian songs and Latin motets, and more than 500 romanescas, 300 passamezzos and 100 galliards, as well as many saltarellos and airs on diverse subjects.

1587
Galilei publishes *Il secondo libro dei madrigali a 4 e a 5 voci*.

1591
Galilei dies in Florence and is buried on 2 July.

KATE MOUNT

Handelian experts

***Adrian Horsewood** speaks to the BROOK STREET BAND about their undiminished enthusiasm for the music of Britain's best-loved German musical import*

Upon meeting the Brook Street Band, one quickly learns that there are two things more dear to their collective hearts than nearly anything else. The first, quite naturally, is the music of Georg Frideric Handel — the group takes its name from the address of the composer's main London residence — which has been the bedrock of the Band's work since its founding in 1996.

The second, slightly less expectedly, is food: when I caught up with the Band it was during their lunch break in the middle of a day of recording, and after tucking into one of the most sumptuous inter-session spreads I've ever seen, most of our conversation strands seemed to turn themselves back towards the topic of cooking, or ingredients, or picnics …

If this sounds flippant, there is a more serious side to this observation; namely, that such a lively shared interest — 'Food *is* important to us!' laughs Tatty Theo, the Band's cellist and founding member — has helped to create a strong bond between the members of the group. This, allied to the relatively stable line-up of the Band — harpsichordist Carolyn Gibley joined in 1999, violinist Farran Scott not long after, while fellow violinist Rachel Harris was also there at the beginning with Theo but took a temporary sabbatical a few years ago — means that the group has a close-knit, yet relaxed, dynamic, which is immediately clear when watching them in action.

The quartet had retired to their usual venue of St Andrew's church on the Raveningham estate, 15 miles south-east of Norwich — all but one of their CDs (all released by Avie Records) to date have been recorded there — to record Handel trio sonatas that are not part of collections published during the composer's lifetime (completing, in a sense, a task begun a decade ago: the Band's second CD was of the Op. 5 collection of trio sonatas, and they released the Op. 2 set in 2013).

As we sat outside on some of the gravestones, basking in the late summer Norfolk sunshine, Theo talks me through the background to the pieces they're tackling. 'It's all music from fairly early in Handel's career, from Italy in 1707 to his voyage to Dresden in 1719. He has such a reputation for being a great "recycler' of music — both his own and other people's — and if you love Handel as I do, it's great fun to spot where the same material pops up in different places! Some of what we're recording this time turns up in the later trio sonatas and even in an organ concerto.'

> **We've played together so much and for so long that we know what every gesture, every breath, every raised eyebrow means**

After the extended lunch break, the Band launches into a fresh piece, a sonata in B flat, the fiery semiquavers of the outer movements serving to shake off any post-prandial torpor. It's clear that spontaneity and fresh thinking are crucial to its way of working as, after a couple of complete takes, the four musicians stop for extended discussion and dissection in which each is happy both to offer and receive detailed comments on stylistic and technical aspects. Harris remarks that the piece is clearly 'the work of a composer writing keyboard lines for string instruments — all the string figurations are the "wrong" way round for the bow!'

They start again, changing some tempi, varying the character of repeated sections, sorting out the balance (with the help of the keen ears of sound engineer Simon Fox-Gál, who has produced all of the Band's CDs; he's clearly now an important part of the gang, which only adds to the openness and good nature of the sessions). From time to time the discussion between takes grows fairly animated and opinions are insistently put across, but it's always focused, friendly, and firmly music-orientated. Finally, the infelicities are ironed out, the players loosen up, and soon they're all smiling, even in the middle of some fiendish passages.

'We often come together for a recording and consciously start with a clean slate, even if it's a piece that we've played hundreds of times before,' remarks Theo in the next break. 'We've played together so much and for so long that we know what every gesture, every breath, every raised eyebrow means! In fact, we don't even always rehearse a programme on the day of a performance — we're happy to take things as they come in the concert and respond in the spur of the moment to a different phrasing here or a change in articulation there.'

The new disc will be released in 2016, to coincide with the culmination of the Band's 20th anniversary season, an all-Handel (of course) concert at the Wigmore Hall featuring some of the group's most popular and successful repertoire. 'Two of our longest-standing colleagues, soprano Nicki Kennedy and bass-baritone Matthew Brook, will be joining us for the cantata *Apollo e Dafne*, and we'll also be performing the ▶

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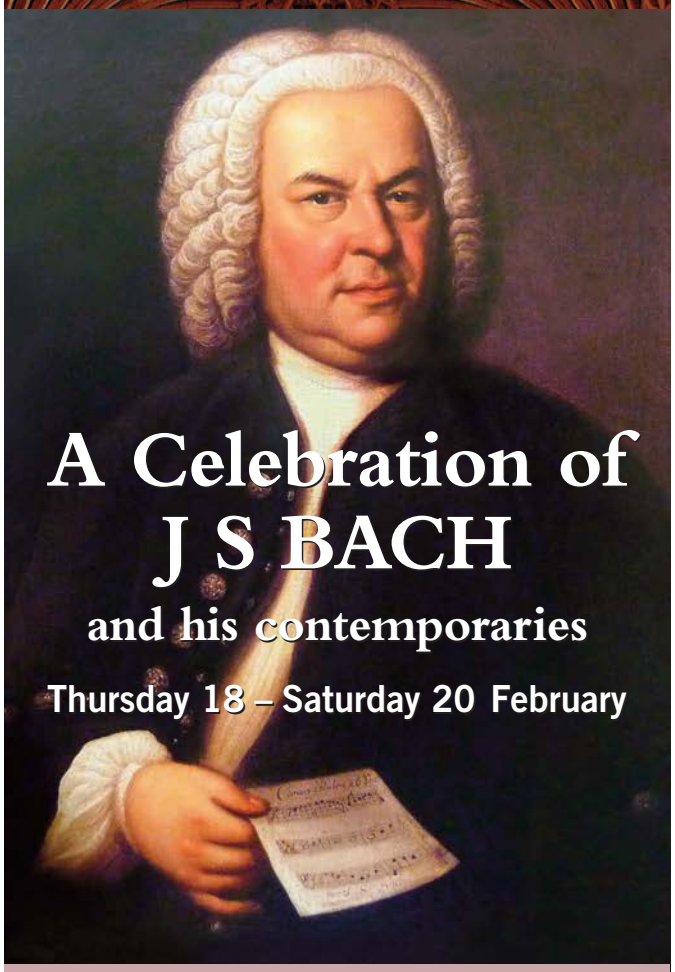

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'Oxford' *Water Music*, which was the music for our first CD.'

Before then, the next big project is based around the life and career of one of Handel's greatest vocal muses, the soprano Margherita Durastanti, for whom the composer wrote over a period of over 25 years in both Rome and London. The 'Handel's Italian Muse' programme again features Nicki Kennedy, singing some of the most famous Italian cantatas, including *Armida abbandonata* and *Crudel tiranno Amor*.

Another ongoing project for the Band is a series of annual performances of Handel's oratorios with the Holst Singers and Stephen Layton, at St John's Smith Square; *Israel in Egypt* and *Joshua* have been done so far, and *Solomon* is next up, in May 2016.

'I first came to Handel's music through the oratorios,' explains Theo, 'and I'm still fond of the sacred music even though I'm an atheist. In fact, I named my two sons Solomon and Samson, after the two oratorios — and so I'm hoping to convince Stephen to programme *Samson* for 2017!'

The Band does occasionally stray away from Handel: they'll be appearing in April 2016 at the venue which gave them their name with a programme entitled 'Signor Corelli's violin', which also features virtuosic trio sonatas by Corelli, Handel, Leclair, Telemann and Vivaldi. (In addition, turn to page 37 of this issue to read a review of sonatas by J.S. and C.P.E. Bach performed by Theo and Gibley.)

A recent expansion of the Band's activities has come in recent years with a large-scale educational project inspired by Handel's oratorio *L'Allegro, il Pensoroso ed il Moderato*. 'Getting a Handle on Handel' saw the group work with composer Matthew King and librettist Alasdair Middleton over three years, who drew inspiration from two very different primary school communities — in Haringey, London and in Suffolk — to create a new oratorio, supported by the PRS for Music Foundation and Arts Council England, among others.

Il Pastorale, l'Urbano e il Suburbano was premiered at Snape Maltings on 10 July this year, and involved over 150 children. At the time, Theo remarked that 'Handel has a real genius for expressing emotion, and was a man of contrasts — lover of town and of countryside, who overcame poverty and the social limitations of his age — whose music has an almost effortless ability to transcend centuries and generations.'

I left the Band as the sun began to set in order to drive back to London, only to learn later that rather than calling it a day, they had in fact kept going into the night — not an uncommon occurrence for them, according to Theo. 'We've usually relaxed about our sessions, and will curtail them or stretch them depending on how they're going and how our energy levels are. If we're feeling good, none of us wants to stop!'

www.brookstreetband.co.uk

The Brook Street Band: friends, colleagues, and food-lovers

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Making waves from the Seine

***Brian Robins** speaks to LAURENCE EQUILBEY about her profound success and founding her own chamber choir*

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The Insula Orchestra at the La Chaise Dieu Festival

It is necessary to be with French conductor Laurence Equilbey only briefly to recognize the presence of a strong, determined woman who knows exactly where she is going. Yet in conversation she has a disarmingly engaging manner, as I discovered when I met her in La Chaise-Dieu, a village situated high in the Auvergne and for nearly 50 years the venue for a festival centered on the vast Benedictine abbey church that dominates the landscape. Later, Equilbey would give a profoundly satisfying concert of choral works by Zelenka, Mozart and C.P.E. Bach in the packed abbey with her Accentus choir and Insula, the period-instrument orchestra she founded in 2012. Since then, London audiences will have had an opportunity to hear the same programme in the very different surroundings of the Barbican.

The trajectory of Equilbey's musical career is unusual, as I noted to her amusement, with the formation of Insula coming more than 20 years after she founded Accentus. 'Originally I studied as a conductor in London, Vienna and Scandinavia,' she said. 'After I returned to Paris from Vienna I decided to found a choir because I had some projects I wanted to do. In Paris there were few chamber choirs in those days, so if you wanted one, you had to start one! It took time to build up a structure around Accentus, but in parallel I have always had invitations to conduct orchestras, including such period instrument orchestras as AAM Berlin, the OAE, Concerto Köln and so on. Then suddenly the opportunity arose for an orchestra based on the new development on L'île Seguin, an island in the Seine on the outskirts of Paris. From 2017 there will be a new concert hall in that complex and Insula will take up residency there. So five years ago I suggested to the *département* concerned that I establish an orchestra to create a relationship with the audience in that area, so that by the time the concert hall was ready Insula would be well known. I chose period instruments because I already have many opportunities to conduct modern orchestras and I have a great affinity with Baroque, Classical and pre-Romantic music.'

Given that Equilbey has a thoroughly eclectic repertoire I wondered how much she considers herself an early music conductor. 'I conduct music from Bach onwards. I don't conduct music earlier than that, although that is not at all to say I do not like it. But it takes a lot of time to be historically informed and do the necessary research on older music, as I know from studying with Harnoncourt. So for me, later Baroque ▶

Equilbey with the Insula Orchestra

© BERTRAND PICHENE/PICTORIA

and Classical music on period instruments is the ideal.'

What about, say, Mozart or Schubert with modern orchestras as well as Insula? 'No, no, Mozart not at all. Schubert is possible. I make a clear division because I think a musician who plays 18th-century music needs to have in mind 17th-century music. You must know where the music comes from.'

she put it, 'I think Franco has the ideal voice for this role. He has a wide range and also the necessary verismo qualities. He has a large voice that is perhaps better suited to this repertoire than Baroque opera. I think he is well matched to the castrato aesthetic of this music. And Franco is such a great actor! You will find with the CD set that there are three discs, one with highlights

In Paris there were few chamber choirs in those days, so if you wanted one, you had to start one!

By the time this article appears Decca will have released the most prestigious recording yet undertaken by Equilbey and her forces, Gluck's *Orfeo ed Euridice* with star countertenor Franco Fagioli in the title role [a review appears on page 37 of this issue]. I suggested that given Fagioli's present high profile the recording must be considered quite a coup. 'It goes back to a couple of years ago, when I invited him to sing Orfeo in a concert version,' Equilbey said. 'It was a huge success with the audience, so we decided to repeat it and do a live recording.'

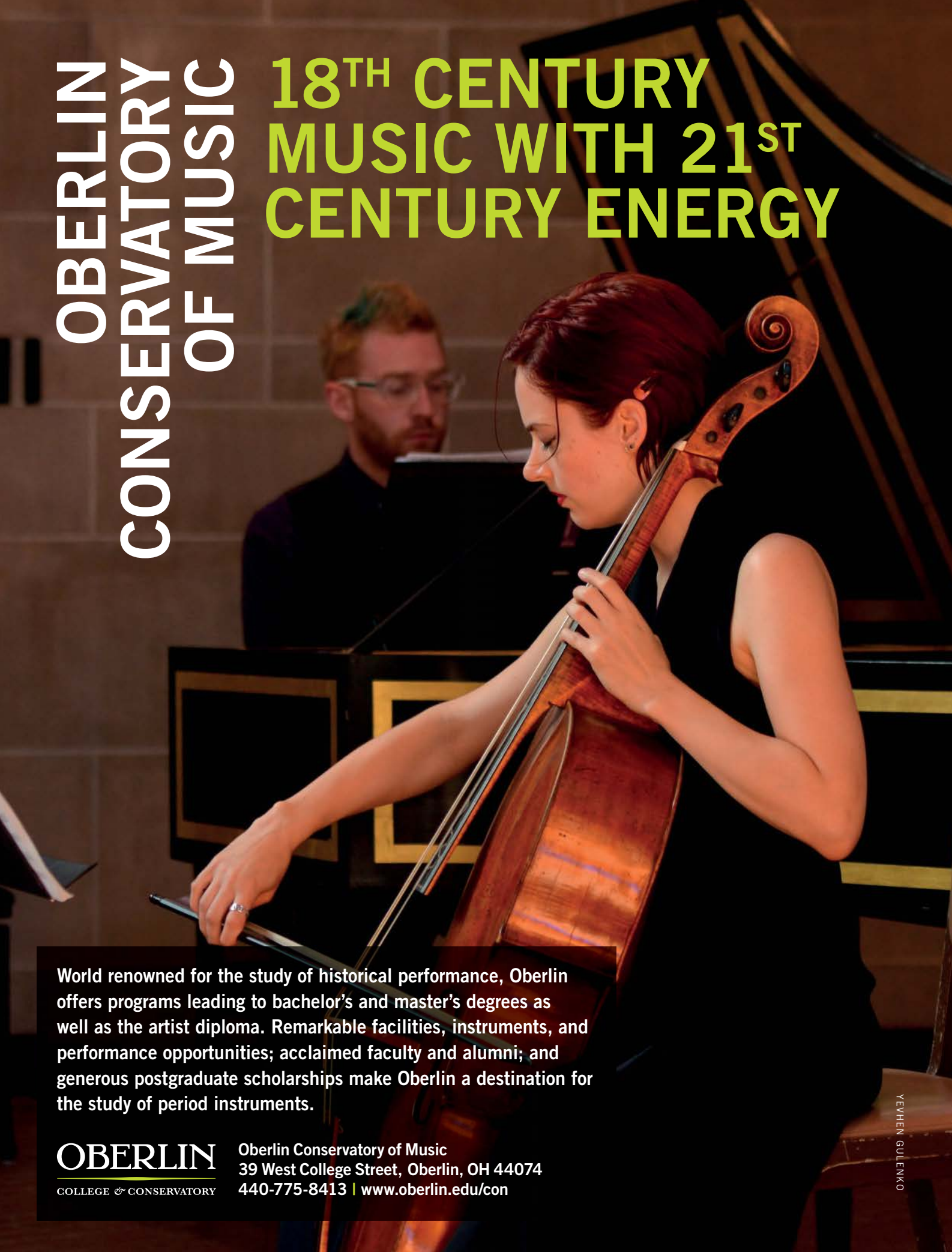
As yet there are no plans for a staged performance, something Equilbey would very much like to do, because, as

from the original Vienna version, but also numbers from the later Paris version, such as the Dance of the Furies and the bravura aria for Orfeo when he decides to enter the underworld ['L'espoir renaît']. The main set is the Vienna Urtext.' Because the Paris version has some much-loved music, is there the temptation to use a conflated version? 'Oh, no, no. That is not good. But I think it's fun to have the highlights disc, which allows us to have the best of all worlds.'

Insula is still a young orchestra and in addition to the move to their new home in 2017, Equilbey has many ambitious plans for its future. I asked her if she could share some of them. 'Yes, of

course. We will work a lot on the Classical period with Mozart and Haydn. Then I very much want to do a lot of Beethoven. This year I will do the *Eroica* and the Piano Concerto No 4. I also want to do the Triple Concerto and the Choral Fantasia. I have done *King Stephen* and intend to do more of the theatre music, including the *Ruins of Athens, Leonore Prohaska* and *Egmont*, which I intend to do on stage with linking dialogue. Not only is the Goethe drama so wonderful, but we must find some way of explaining how the music fits. So those are all projects for the next three years. Then I also want to do a lot of Weber. We did the oratorio *Kampf und Sieg* and I want to do some extracts from *Der Freischütz*. And then perhaps the *Messe Solennelle* of the young Gounod. So next year we will cover a period from 1750 to 1850, which is our main focus for the moment.' Given this repertoire covers a period of great change in instruments and bows, I asked Equilbey if she and her players took cognisance of these differences. 'Very much so. The strings and I have a fantastic cellist and we meet often to discuss such matters, and the same applies to the wind players.'

Vibrant and ambitious, it is Laurence Equilbey's obvious integrity that comes across as her strongest asset, leaving little doubt that she, Accentus and Insula will be making strong waves on the Seine for many years to come.



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YEVHEN GULENKO

Are you ready to B'Rock?

About to celebrate their tenth anniversary, the Belgian B'Rock Orchestra has enjoyed a fruitful decade. ***Rhian Morgan*** *delves into their history*

Founded in Ghent in 2005, the Belgian B'Rock Orchestra looks back on a glorious summer which featured a well-received BBC Proms debut, and looks forward to a season which includes rare visits to the UK and performances of its anniversary programme in the Belgian city of Hasselt and on home territory in Ghent.

The group was established by harpsichordist, composer and conductor Frank Agsteribbe, bassist Tom Devaere and cultural managers Tomas Bisschop and Hendrik Storme. Bisschop, also the group's managing director, says that at the time they all felt 'an urge for renewal and rejuvenation in the world of early music.'

Its international musicians specialise, he says, 'in historically well-founded performance practices and they distinguish themselves by their open mind and flexibility of repertoire and playing style.' While some productions are without conductor and are led by concertmaster Rodolfo Richter, at other times they invite external artistic leaders to conduct a specific project. 'We have a combination of well-established conductors or leaders like René Jacobs, Andreas Spering or Eduardo Lopez-Banzo,' explains Bisschop. 'We also bring in the younger generation like the Greek conductor George Petrou or the virtuoso Russian violinist Dmitry Sinkovsky.'

But it's a crowded field; how does Bisschop feel B'Rock stands out? 'Our repertoire is quite unique,' he says. 'In the choices it makes for its concert programmes, B'Rock combines established works of baroque composition with the lesser-known repertoire of the 17th- and 18th-centuries.' In December's programmes in London and York, for example, where the group is joined by the soprano Julia Doyle, the old and the new are fused with seasonal music in 'poignant and pastoral works by Charpentier and glowing arias of Scarlatti's gleaming Christmas cantata,' which will be performed side by side with an arrangement of Arvo Pärt's *Fratres*.

'The way that the orchestra pursues a bold and innovative programme policy in which early and contemporary music meet means they enrich each other,' continues Bisschop, who is pleased that the orchestra sometimes focuses on giving

MIRJAM DEVRIENDT

B'Rock celebrate their tenth anniversary in style

first performances of new music written with historic instruments in mind. Premieres have included Uri Caine's Concerto for Viola da Gamba and Strings, which was commissioned by B'Rock, and Dominique Pauwels' *The Passion According to Judas*, which was a collaboration with Collegium Vocale Gent. The group has also given frequent performances of works by John Cage, Arvo Pärt and the Belgian serial, electronic and minimalist composer Karel Goeyvaerts.

The orchestra also has a reputation for cross-genre productions, performing early music in combination with theatre, visual art and video. They have partnerships with De Munt/La Monnaie in Brussels and Muziektheater Transparant in Antwerp. There has been a performance of Gluck's *Orfeo ed Euridice* with realtime video, and *Vor deinem Thron* with Action Scénique, mixing Bach with contemporary dance.

The programming is described to be democratic, with an artistic board made up of management, the concertmaster and section representatives taking overall responsibility. They meet regularly, according to Bisschop, to discuss programming, artistic evaluation and casting.

One of the group's biggest projects for 2016 will be a staged version of Bach's *St John* Passion at the Klarafestival in Brussels in March. 'This musical icon is set in relief against new work by the Palestinian-Israeli composer Samir Odeh-Tamimi and the Flemish composer Annelies Van Parys,' says Bisschop of the 'And You Must Suffer' programme. 'The French-Lebanese director Pierre Audi provides pared-down staging and the artist Wim Delvoye designs the stage setting. As a whole, it is a universal reflection on the role of religion, identity, sacrifice, suffering and, above all, compassion, in a period of increasing diversity.'

Also in 2016 is the continuation of what Bisschop calls the 'fantastic collaboration' with pianist Alexander Melnikov. With performances of Mozart's Piano Concerto no 17, K453 in Belgium, Austria, the Netherlands and Lithuania in May and June 2016, Bisschop describes Melnikov as 'the perfect pianist to perform this refined solo part.'

B'Rock, which numbers 20 or so permanent players from all corners of the world, sees its first decade as a journey 'full of magical moments, intense emotions, enriching collaborations and captivating productions'. Now firmly established, and with a well-filled concert calendar and expanding audiences, it is honest enough to admit to 'doubts, challenges and pitfalls' along the way. But in the anniversary celebrations, the negatives can be overlooked with the press describing their performances as 'thrilling, refined and transparent, supple and elegant.' 'The name of the ensemble is dead on,' wrote a critic at the Potsdamer Neueste Nachtrichte recently. 'The musicians play their historic instruments with an appealing groove.'

So why the name B'Rock? Cool or cringeworthy? We'll never know; 'that's one of the hidden secrets of the orchestra,' concludes Bisschop cryptically.

B'Rock will be performing 'A Baroque X-Mas' at the Spitalfields Winter Festival on December 11 and at the York Early Music Festival on December 12; www.b-rock.org

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EDITOR'S CHOICE

A Gabrieli: Messa bassa a San Marco
I Cantori di San Marco, Marco Gemmani (d)
Tactus TC 530701
★★★★★

The name Gabrieli conjures up images of resplendent ceremony in St Mark's Venice, but this outstanding disc offers a very different perspective on Andrea, the elder of the two Gabrielis associated with the basilica. It includes 14 six- or seven-part motets and the *Missa Vexilla Regis,* all *a cappella* works composed in the *stile antico.* Probably composed for low Mass celebrated in a side chapel in St Mark's, it is music almost certainly performed, as here, with single voices per part. The motets are drawn from a collection of sacred and secular 'concertos' by Andrea and his nephew Giovanni published in 1587, two years after the death of Andrea. Although contrapuntal, the settings are largely syllabic, with melisma mostly kept to a minimum. The result is a series of wonderfully expressive miniatures, with transparent textures that allow the frequent madrigalian gestures to make their impact. At the same time the love of colour, the contrasts of texture, and occasional outbreak of exuberance all bear the mark of a thoroughly Venetian composer.

The performances by the mixed ensemble are quite simply outstanding, beautifully tuned and balanced, with no single voice dominating and some lovely singing in such passages as the remarkable 'Crucifixus' in the Credo of the Mass, set for soprano and alto. Latin texts and scores are available online. **BR**

I Cantori di San Marco performing in Ravenna

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CDs

Forgotten Vienna: Dittersdorf, Wanhal, Ordonez
The Amadè Players, The Choir of Sidney Sussex College, Cambridge, Nicholas Newland (d)
Resonus RES 10157
★★★★☆

This makes for an attractive collection of works by a trio of composers active in Vienna at the time of Haydn and Mozart. Indeed, both Johann Baptist Wanhal (Vaňhal) and Carl Ditters von Dittersdorf were members of the celebrated string quartet that included their more famous colleagues. The finest composer of the trio is the Bohemian-born Wanhal, here represented by one of his best symphonies, an intense and dramatic work in A minor (Bryan a2), an appealing Violin Concerto in B flat, and a brief Requiem in E flat, probably written in memory of the composer's mother, and a work that touches by dint of its extreme simplicity, the choral writing – there are no soloists – confined to clear homophony.

The other pieces consist of a Concerto for two violins in C by Ditters, a work of charm if no great distinction, and a short four-movement symphony by Karl Ordonez (1734–1786), the most old-fashioned work included and doubtless the earliest work here, the serious opening Adagio retaining more than a hint of the Baroque. The performances are very appealing, with fine orchestral playing from George Clifford in the concertos by Wanhal and Ditters, where he is joined by Domenika Fehér in the Ditters. The choir is not seriously challenged in the Requiem, although ensemble is not always precise. **BR**

Charpentier à la Chapelle Royale de Versailles
La Capella Reial de Catalunya, Le Concert des Nations, Jordi Savall (d)
Alia Vox AV DVD 9905
★★★★☆

This sumptuously presented package includes a DVD and 2 CDs, making for a playing time of nearly four hours. It is centred around the Missa Assumpta est Maria, Charpentier's last mass and a work of surpassing beauty. There are two versions, H11 and H11a, the latter being scored for smaller forces. Although the booklet claims that the performance on the DVD is of H11, I'm fairly sure both the DVD and CD 2 are the same performance of H11a, a conclusion that seems to be corroborated by the cover information. Although none of the works included was composed for the Chapelle Royale, it makes for a perfect setting.

The remainder of the programme is largely devoted to Marian pieces, CD 1 including several of the same works as the DVD, but they are taken from an Astrée disc first issued in 1989. They make for a fascinating comparison, the one-to-a-part star-studded line up of men in 1989 superior to the 2004 Chapelle Royale line-up, though it is touching to find Arianna Savall singing the music her mother Montserrat Figueras sang some 15 years earlier. Leaving aside a few questionable tempos, the singing, playing and direction all attain distinction, as does the visual component. **BR**

Louis XIV: Les Musiques du Roi-Soleil
Charpentier & Lully: Te Deum
Le Poème Harmonique, Capella Cracoviensis, Vincent Dumestre (d)
Du Mont: Grands Motets for the Chapel of Louis XIV
Ensemble Pierre Robert, Frédéric Desenclos (d)
Versailles, L'Île Enchantée
Capriccio Stravagante, Skip Sempé (d)
Alpha 961
★★★★★

The CDs contained in this package are not new issues – indeed one of them is almost 15 years old. The reason for their assembly is to mark the 300th anniversary of the death of Louis the Fourteenth. Lully was the Sun King's music superintendent until his death in 1687 and he is represented here by his sumptuous setting of the Te Deum. Alongside is Charpentier's famous setting of the canticle. He never held a court appointment but we know from contemporary reports that the King enjoyed his music.

Another composer who excelled in the sphere of sacred music was Henri Du Mont. He played an important role in establishing the structure of the 'grand motet' and four such pieces written for the King's chapel at the Louvre palace – Mansart's masterpiece at Versailles was not completed until 1710 – are included in the anthology. The third disc offers a conspectus of solo vocal and instrumental forms by assorted composers of the 'grand siècle'. Airs by Michel Lambert and Campra are interspersed with dances from the Lully-Molière comédie-ballet *Le bourgeois Gentilhomme*, solo harpsichord pieces by Chambonnières, D'Anglebert, Le Roux, Louis and François Couperin and pièces de viole by Marais. All-in-all a stylish tribute to the 'Plus Grand Roi du Monde'. **NA**

Vinci: Catone in Utica
soloists, Il Pomo d'Oro, Riccardo Minasi (d)
Decca 478 8194
★★★☆☆

Hard on the heels of *Artaserse* comes another castrato-fest from the pen of Leonardo Vinci. *Catone in Utica* was premiered in Rome in 1728 and, like *Artaserse*, has a libretto by Metastasio. Seven years later, a moderated version of the text was used by Vivaldi in his opera of the same name. Vinci's music in the 'galant' Neapolitan style is unfailingly appealing and all the more so when in the mouths of some of the world's finest countertenors. Their vocal agility is often astonishing as indeed is their flair for idiomatic embellishment. In this latter respect Franco Fagioli (Caesar) is especially noteworthy and his bravura technique serves him well – though his vibrato can be irritating. Max Emanuel Cencic in the role of Caesar's rival, Arbace, Valer Sabadus, daughter of Cato and Juan Sancho (Cato) are splendid.

Metastasio's text is dramatically effective, affording opportunities for strong and clearly delineated

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characterization. That is just as well; at almost four hours long, this is not an opera for the faint-hearted. It is to the credit of the soloists and excellent instrumentalists of Il Pomo d'Oro that the entertainment remains buoyant throughout under the stylish and energetic direction of Riccardo Minasi. The boisterous three-movement opening sinfonia with brass and timpani in its outer movements vividly captures the prevailing spirit of the work. **NA**

Campra: Tancrède
soloists, Orchestre Les Temps Présents, Le Chantres du Centre du Musique Baroque de Versailles, Olivier Schneebeli (d)
Alpha 958
★★★★½

The high quality of Campra's music has yet perhaps to be fully appreciated. As well as being an innovator in the sphere of *opéra-ballet* he was a gifted composer of sacred music and an imaginative follower of Lully in the composition of *tragédies lyriques*. *Tancrède* is one such piece. Cast in the established pattern of a prologue and five acts, Antoine Danchet's libretto recounts the tragic story of the lovers Tancred and Clorinda contained in Tasso's epic poem 'Gerusalemme liberata'. The opera was premiered in Paris in 1702 and enjoyed several revivals, in one of which the role of Herminie, in love with Tancred, was sung by Madame de Pompadour.

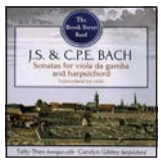
Listening to Campra's score we quickly become aware of the composer's intuitive skill in writing for the voice and his colourful and kinetic feeling for dance. Olivier Schneebeli and his *équipe* have recorded a live complete version of the work after a 30-year interval since Jean-Claude Malgoire made his live recording with cuts in Aix-en-Provence. The new version is stylistically more fluent than the other and the declamation more dramatic. While the Prologue gets off to an uncertain start with tenor Erwin Aros sounding strained, the performance gathers momentum and assurance. A few rough edges in the choruses did little to spoil my enjoyment. Benoît Arnould in the title role is authoritative and his 'Sombres forêts' (Act 4) passionately declaimed. A ravishing score, rated by Rameau a masterpiece. **NA**

Gluck: Orfeo ed Euridice
soloists, Accentus, Insula Orchestra, Laurence Equilbey (d)
Archiv 00289 479 5315
★★★★★

For me the major significance of *Orfeo ed Euridice* is not its place in the so-called 'reform' of opera, which is exaggerated, but rather its unique ability to express grief and loss with simple, intensely touching dignity. It is this Classical restraint that lies at the heart of this quite exceptional performance of the original Vienna version of 1762. This is not to suggest there is anything remotely underplayed in Fagioli's assumption of the role, or indeed the performance as a whole.

The scenes with the restored Euridice, the exceptional Malin Hartelius, simmer with repressed physical desire, while the drama of the Hades scene is articulated not only by Fagioli's exquisite shaping of Orfeo's pleas, but the raw brutality of Accentus' Furies. Among the many qualities of Fagioli's richly conceived performance, let me highlight 'Che puro', sung with exquisite purity of line and ever mounting intensity. Add a perfectly charming Amore from Emmanuelle de Negri, the splendid playing of Insula and the superbly dramatic conviction of Laurence Equilbey's direction, and what you have is unquestionably one of the top versions of this infinitely moving work.

It remains to add that the set includes a third CD that conflates excerpts with the additions Gluck composed for the 1774 Paris version, a nice touch that gives the best of both worlds. **BR**



J.S and C.P.E. Bach: Sonatas for viola da gamba and harpsichord, transcribed for cello
Tatty Theo, Carolyn Gibley
AVIE AV2321
★★★★½

Before, during and indeed despite the modern revival of the viol, Bach's three sonatas for viola da gamba and keyboard have long been staples of the modern cello repertoire, so it is striking that this is the first recording of the pieces using what Tatty Theo describes as a 'regular four-string baroque cello'. The length of the three sonatas, back-to-back, is notoriously about twenty minutes short of a full disk, and Theo and Gibley have chosen to complete the recording with one of C.P.E. Bach's sonatas for the same combination: the 'Trio Sonata' Wq88, which, with its obbligato harpsichord part, forms a nice complement to the three Bach sonatas.

Theo's 1741 Joseph Hill cello seems perfect for this music – her tone is warm and captures some of the plangency of the viola da gamba, but with a refreshing robustness. The recording balance is excellent, the harpsichord sound sparkling but not dominant. Occasionally the articulation seems heavy, with too much importance placed on the smaller notes, and the music then lacks a sense of line; one can also hear that some passages do not lie easily on the cello. Overall however, an impressive recording and some infectious music-making from two performers who clearly take great pleasure in playing together. **CR**

Carolus Hacquart: Le maistre de musique
Francois Fernandez, Luis Otavio Santez, Laurent Stewart, Eduardo Egüez, Rainer Zipperling, Kaori Uemura, Philippe Pierlot
FLORA 0705
★★★★★

Carolus Hacquart: Suites for Viol (opus 3, 1686)
Guido Balestracci, Nicola dal Maso, Rafael Bonavita, Massimiliano Raschietti
Pan Classics PC 10338
★★★★★

Carolus Hacquart, though not a household name even among the early music fraternity, was arguably the most important composer of the Low Countries in the 17th century. Listening to both discs, it seems that Hacquart is ripe for a wider revival. In the ensemble

sonatas recorded by Fernandez and co., one can hear traces of Biber, Erlebach – even Purcell, an apt reminder that, by virtue of their geographical position, the Low Countries were quite the melting-pot of musical influences.

As was common among his Northern European contemporaries, Hacquart treats the viola da gamba as a melody instrument in these sonatas; particularly striking is the *Sonata settima a tre*, with its fine balance between Fernandez' violin and Phillipe Pierlot's viol, and a rich continuo of viol, archlute and organ. The entire ensemble plays with supreme nuance and sensitivity, with some refined ornamentation and an overall sense of pace and drama; the only disappointment is that Laurent Stewart's keyboard continuo is not more present in the overall sound.

For those new to Hacquart, this disc is an excellent introduction. My only quibble is the English translation of the note, which is a little awkward – translating the Netherlands as the 'Low Lands' and the English King James II as 'Jacob II'. But this is a minor detail, as the contextual information is excellent.

The *Suites for Viol* likewise occupy a middle ground somewhere between Biber's violin sonatas and Marais' first two books, perhaps leaning closer to Marais in their classical balance of movements and perfectly poised sarabandes. Balestracci delves deeply into the musical rhetoric, bringing a different colour and sense of *Affekt* to each key; the result is an enticing performance in which each suite maintains a clearly delineated character.

Hacquart's suites were published without a continuo bass, although one exists in a manuscript copied in England around the same time; it is this which Pierlot uses when recording three of the sarabandes for *Le maistre de musique.* Balestracci employs a large bass group throughout, and it would be interesting to know whether these continuo parts are his own invention, or taken from the same manuscript – also why a violone, rather than a second viol, was chosen as the preferred bowed bass. The continuo is supportive of the performance though, and gives added depth to Balestracci's strong, resonant tone.

All in all, some masterful solo playing, and pieces which deserve more attention among performers. **CR**

Christopher Simpson, Ayres and Graces
Chelys Consort of Viols
BIS BIS-2153
★★★★☆

Simpson is known mostly to viol players for his tutor *The Division Viol*, and to theorists for his *Compendium of Practical Music*, so it's exciting to see his consort music taking centre stage for this debut recording from Chelys. The pieces in question are 'Ayres' for two trebles and two basses, an interesting polarisation of the traditional consort texture also explored by Jenkins and Lawes.

Although not grouped into 'setts' in their manuscript source, Chelys have chosen to present them as such, noting that there are musical links between pieces in the same key, and, taking inspiration from two unfigured continuo parts in the source, have added James Akers (on theorbo and baroque guitar) and Dan Tidhar (organ and harpsichord) to the consort.

The ensemble playing is beautiful – precise and delicate, with discreet use of ornaments from Simpson's *Division Viol*. In the pavins, particularly those of the B flat and C major groups, the players achieve a radiant, glowing sound; the fast movements are sprightly, especially when supported by the guitar, but feel a little on the safe side – here, and in the four sets of divisions, it would be nice if a few more risks were taken. The note is excellent, and it is refreshing to read such a good explanation of the performance practice decisions made here. **CR**

Euskel Antiqua
Euskal Barrokensemble, Enrike Solinís (d)
Alia Vox AVV9910
★★★★★

Much of the satisfaction of this fabulous disc of early Basque music from Jordi Savall's new Alia Vox Diversa label lies in its conceptual coherence. Enrike Solinís and his Euskal Barrokensemble present a fascinating survey of both what made Basque music distinct from that of its neighbours and of what connected it to the outside world.

Many of the tracks demonstrate how early Basque musicians absorbed the foreign; the orientally-inflected *Koumis-Ezpatadantza*, for example, melds a dance of Persian origin with a traditional Basque sword dance.

Elsewhere we hear the influence of the Jews expelled from Vitoria to Bayonne in 1492, whose synagogue melodies were incorporated into the Basque canon. On the flip side, pieces such as 'Con amores, la mi madre' are examples of traditional Basque melodies introduced to foreign lands by collectors in the service of Castilian and Aragonese royalty.

Most of the vocal tracks, from the spiritual to the bawdily profane, are in the still-mysterious Basque language, Euskera, whose natural rise and fall and mouth-bending diphthongs render it a beautifully expressive tool.

The instruments used by Solinís' superb musicians also represent a combination of borrowing and burgeoning legacy, ranging from the *alboka* to the *txistu*, the traditional three-holed flute still heard at festivals across the modern Basque Country, the most potent symbol of the region's continuing musical folk revival.

Euskal Antiqva provides a fascinating snapshot of the Basque Country's place in the early modern world both musically and in a wider sense. A faithfully researched labour of love, the passion of the musicians is blazingly clear in performances of terrific verve and commitment. **TH**

Christopher Hogwood: The Vivaldi Recordings
The Academy of Ancient Music
Editions de L'Oiseau-Lyre 480 8019
★★★★★

Christopher Hogwood, who died in 2014 aged 73, was a seminal figure in the period-instrument movement of the 1970s and 1980s; his performances and recordings with the Academy of Ancient Music and the ensemble he founded in 1973 were acclaimed for their radical freshness and the repertoire they explored.

Before his death, Hogwood had been working with Decca Classics on re-issues of many of his recordings on the L'Oiseau-Lyre label, repackaged into slimline cardboard sleeves and released in five clam-shell boxes.

Christopher Hogwood devoted so much of his time and efforts in the area of Baroque music to Bach and Handel — and his recordings of those composers' works invariably attracted the most attention of his output — that this large collection of Vivaldi recordings comes as somewhat of a surprise. It's a cornucopia of thrilling recordings, and a firm riposte to any wag who might suggest that Vivaldi simply composed the same concerto time and time again.

The opening discs are given over to the *L'Estro Armonico* op. 3 set of concertos, with the glittering talents of John Holloway, Monica Huggett, Catherine Mackintosh and Elizabeth Wilcock as soloists; the five-movement F major concerto, no. 7, is a particular highlight here (an added bonus later in the box is Bach's famous arrangement of the B minor concerto from *L'Estro Armonico* for four harpsichords). The 12 concertos of *La Stravaganza*, op. 4, receive strong performances, as do the op. 6 violin concertos with Andrew Manze as soloist and the op. 12 collection with Pavlo Beznosiuk.

The highpoint of the collection is *Il cimento dell'armonia e dell'inventione*, op. 8: hearing the first four concertos — better known as *The Four Seasons* — surrounded by their companion pieces makes one wonder why it should be that they alone have gained such a popularity. Vivaldi's particular talent is, I feel, primarily rhythm-based, in that his feel for harmonic rhythm and how best to vary it is what gives his works sparkle — and nowhere is that more obvious than in this collection.

Stephen Preston's flute concertos, op. 10, include a scintillating 'Tempesta di Mare', and Christophe Coin gives us exquisite performances of nine cello concertos and three of the sonatas. After this comes a collection of concertos for more unusual combinations of instruments — did you know that Vivaldi wrote a concerto for two oboes and two clarinets? I certainly didn't — which reveal some wonderful riches, including three bassoon concertos in which Danny Bond is an outstanding soloist.

As with the box-set of Hogwood's Bach recordings, vocal works take up only the very end of the collection, but they're worth persevering for. Emma Kirkby is radiant in the two cantatas 'Amor, hai vinto' and 'Nulla in mundo pax sincera', but it's James Bowman's ravishing performances in the *Stabat Mater* RV 621 and the *Nisi Dominus* RV 608 that are to die for. **AH**

J.S. Bach: Matthäus-Passion (Mendelssohn version, 1841)
Soloists, Consensus Vocalis, Netherlands Symphony Orchestra, Jan Willem de Vriend (d)
Challenge Classics CC72661
★★★☆☆

That Bach's *St Matthew* Passion is so beloved and known today is down in no small part to the efforts of Felix Mendelssohn and his mentor Carl Zelter, who reintroduced the work to the German public in 1829. From there, performances became widespread across Germany and other parts of Europe, and in 1841 Mendelssohn conducted a performance of the work in Bach's own church, the Thomaskirche in Leipzig.

Mendelssohn, in preparing his performance version, made several cuts and alterations to Bach's original text (turn to page 42 for a review of the new Bärenreiter edition of Mendelssohn's version), ones which might horrify/upset us today but which, in his mind, were necessary in order to make the piece more palatable to his contemporaries. This recording is of the 1841 version, albeit with modern instruments, and overall it's very good. Tempos are, on the whole, fairly broad, although nothing drags; the orchestra are sprightly and responsive when needed, although a weighty continuo group does sometimes overbalance the recitatives.

The principal soloists all sing forthrightly — Evangelist Jörg Dürmüller is the best of the bunch (he also performs the tenor arias), although his Christus Marcos Fink is at times uncomfortable with the upper range of the part. On the whole, this would be a useful (and not disappointing) acquisition for those keenly interested in the performance history of the *St Matthew* Passion, but I wouldn't choose it as an introduction to the work. **AH**

Haydn: La Passione
Il Giardino Armonico, Giovanni Antonini
Alpha 670
★★★★☆

Haydn: Il Filosofo
Il Giardino Armonico, Giovanni Antonini
Alpha 671
★★★★☆

With his 'Haydn 2032' project, Giovanni Antonini aims to record all 107 Haydn symphonies by 2032, the year that will mark the tricentenary of the composer's birth. The plan is to divide the recordings between his two regular ensembles, Il Giardino Armonico and the Basel Chamber Orchestra, and to group the symphonies thematically rather than chronologically. Volume 1 explores 'Passion' in nos 49 (aka 'La Passione'), 39 and 1; Volume 2, about 'Originality', features nos 46, 47 and 22 (aka 'Il Filosofo'). Antonini also proposes to contextualize Haydn's music by including works by his contemporaries, so Gluck's 1761 ballet suite *Don Juan*, with its fiery climax, anticipates the *Sturm und Drang* intensity of Symphonies 39 and 49, while Volume 2 has an eccentric W. F. Bach symphony that sits well beside Haydn's later quirky experimentalism in, for example, no 46s capricious finale and no 47s minuet and trio 'al roverso' (played backwards).

Il Giardino Armonico, with their reputation for speed, precision and pizzazz, are a good choice for these opening volumes, which focus chiefly on Haydn's *Sturm und Drang* symphonies (i.e. no's 39, 46, 47 and 49), renowned for their driving rhythms, volatile dynamics and exhilarating dissonances. The group's lean, razor-sharp strings, and punchy horns and oboes certainly enhance Haydn's scintillating faster movements, yet also bring a burnished glow to the Adagios and Andantes. Tempi tend to be pacy, justifiably so given the music's inherent vitality, but occasionally seem a little too scampering, especially in the minuets, which hurry along faster than any other versions I've heard.

Still, these are exciting performances that stand comparison with the benchmark period-instrument

recordings by Trevor Pinnock and Derek Solomons. I especially enjoyed Il Giardino Armonico's fluent treatment of Symphonies 46 and 47, which sound fresh and reinvigorated here, though with all due care paid to nuances of colour and dynamic. The group are brilliant at conveying the emotional turbulence that courses through parts of no's 39 and 49 and the close of *Don Juan*, where the Don plummets into the flames of hell amid ominously blasting horns and yelping oboes. The fervour and anguish of these pieces are portrayed vividly, yet with the utmost musicality. The first volume ends with a spirited version of Haydn's Symphony no 1, a favourite of Antonini, because, he says, it already shows Haydn's 'style, his sense of humour, and his love of the unexpected'. **GL**

Agrippina
Ann Hallenberg, Il Pomo d'Oro, Riccardo Minasi (d)
Deutsche Harmonia Mundi
88875055982
★★★★★

Ann Hallenberg's latest recital disc introduces three Agrippinas from the same imperial Roman family. Most (in)famous of the trio is Julia Agrippina, Nero's murderous mother, already familiar to us as the titular anti-heroine of Handel's 1709 operatic masterpiece. Hallenberg has unearthed five other baroque operas (by Graun, Magni, Mattheson, Orlandini and Perti) in which she appears, three more (by Legrenzi, Porpora and Telemann) that feature her mother, Julia Vipsania Agrippina, plus one (by Sammartini) about her aunt, Vipsania Agrippina.

All three women met tragic ends, although the latter pair were sympathetic characters, allowing Hallenberg to select arias that run a gamut of emotions, from the profound pathos of Julia Vipsania's lovely 'Rimembranza crudel' (from Telemann's *Germanicus*) to her daughter's bravura 'rage aria, 'Mi paventi il figlio indegno' (from Graun's *Britannico*), which Hallenberg sings with thrilling virtuosity, accompanied by a pair of fiercely braying horns.

Other highlights include three Handel arias, two from Porpora's debut opera, the 1708 *L'Agrippina*, and a second Graun aria, the enchanting and sinuous lament 'Se la mia vita, o figlio'. Hallenberg's research has uncovered a treasure-trove of little-known baroque operas—12 of the 16 arias on her disc are world-premiere recordings—but it's the dashing vivacity and assurance of her singing, superbly supported by Il Pomo d'Oro, that make this a release to cherish. **GL**

The Bach Players
Bach and his rivals
Georg Philipp Telemann
Christoph Graupner
Johann Sebastian Bach
Cantatas for audition at Leipzig, 1722–3, and for 30 January 1724 in Hamburg, Darmstadt, Leipzig

Bach and his rivals
The Bach Players
Hyphen Press Music
HPM 008
★★★★★

The unforeseeable consequences a seemingly small decision can entail have long been the subject of historical discussion: Pascal famously remarked that 'if Cleopatra's nose had been shorter, the whole history of the world would have been changed.' Similarly, how different would the history of Western classical music be if, on the death of Johann Kuhnau in 1722, the Leipzig town councillors had managed to hire to succeed him as Thomaskantor either of their preferred candidates (Georg Philipp Telemann and Christoph Graupner) and had not resorted to the man who came third —Johann Sebastian Bach. This latest recording from the Bach Players gathers the audition pieces by each composer and couples them with the cantatas written by each for the same Sunday roughly a year later.

It's a marvellous concept and serves to show why Telemann and Graupner were so highly thought of: the former is light and urbane, influenced by the French style; the latter's style is grander, stemming from his associations with the opera and the court. And Bach? Well, he's *sui generis* — it's difficult to ignore hindsight, but even in his audition cantata one feels a presentiment of what was to lie ahead in his 27-year tenure in Leipzig. The performances by the Bach Players are at their customary exemplary level; the continuo group is quite excellent. The stand-out performances, however, come from the four singers, of whom bass Matthew Brook is just slightly *primus inter pares*. For a sense of why the right decision might have been made after all, listen to Bach's cantata 'Jesus schläft, was soll ich hoffen?': some lovely wind playing and spirited strings are complemented by outstanding singing, not least by tenor Simon Wall in a flying trapeze of an aria. **AH**

Pilgrimage to Montserrat
The Renaissance Players
Tall Poppies TP229
★★★★☆

Cantigas de Santa Maria IV: Pillar of Wisdom
The Renaissance Players
Tall Poppies TP231
★★★★☆

Cantigas de Santa Maria V: Gabriel's Message
The Renaissance Players
Tall Poppies TP232
★★★★☆

The Renaissance Players – with their revolving line-up of a dozen or so musicians, poetry readers, dancers and, often, miming clowns, and vast repertoire of many thousands of early lyrics – have been colourful stalwarts of Australia's early music scene since their formation in 1967. Their director Winsome Joan Evans, sometimes known as Snave Pluckpayres, is Associate Professor at the University of Sydney, where her academic output has included the recomposition of J. S. Bach's solo violin works for clavicembalo, adding accompaniments as she believes Bach must have had in mind.

The Players return to the scene after a break in their recorded output with three discs in 2014: *Pilgrimage to Montserrat*, and two additions to their *Cantigas de Santa Maria* series entitled *Gabriel's Message* and *Pillar of Wisdom*. The playing and singing throughout is very fine indeed, showcasing some excellent young Australian singers alongside often more established instrumentalists.

Evans passionately believes in Alfonso's portrayal of himself – given out through the illuminations in the 'Escorial' codex of the *Cantigas* – as a patron of Christian, Jewish and Islamic musicians in equal measure and as an

advocate for their uniting and blending. To that end, a dazzling kaleidoscope of instrumental timbres is featured across the two *Cantigas* discs, from zūrnā, baglama and panderos to gemshorn, diwan saz and vielle to harp, castanets and bombard and beyond. There is some very accomplished and effective reciting, some feather-light and pure – yet energized – soprano work ('Entre Av' e Eva', *Pillar of Wisdom*), and the texts are brought to life unquestionably vividly. The featured improvisation ranges from the slightly aimless to the totally inspired. I like the representation of Gabriel by male and female voices doubling at the octave, though Evans explains that the idea is borrowed from Gerard Corbiau's 1994 film *Farinelli*.

Pilgrimage to Montserrat features 19 musicians altogether, a convincing collection of pilgrims; some terrific corporate energy ('Stella splendens') and some exuberant circle-dance extensions. Some of the rhythmic transcription is unorthodox and not always convincing ('Cuncti simus concanentes'), but structural decisions are explained in detail in Evans's extremely thorough liner notes.

The number of instruments and sounds Evans has gathered across these discs – in reflection of the multi-faith melting-pot that existed across the Catalonian and Iberian worlds – is extraordinary and very exciting. She goes further than the parameters of instrumentation in creating her own melting-pot of influences, with nods to entirely different musical styles and other creative media. Sometimes this misfires; some of the backing vocals on 'Bẽeyto foi o dia' (Gabriel's message) are a little more 'Mariah Carey' than 'Marian cantigas', and there are frequent incongruous New Age-y moments throughout. *Pilgrimage to Montserrat*'s dedication to the late filmmaker Robin Anderson results in introductory and concluding ('Ghost') pastiche tracks, in which a melody from the *Ludus Danielis* is given a parodied Latin text wherein a pop festival in Runnymede, Australia is dedicated to Anderson's memory, the liner notes explaining that '[the] concept of metamorphosis [herein] is akin to the 'boy-who-became-a-Muni-bird' tradition of the Kaluli people of Papua New Guinea – something of a jolt, presumably, to anyone expecting the 'O Virgo splendens hic in monte celso' (which does appear, though out of sequential order part-way through the second disc of this double-CD).

Not one for purists, then – though solid research forms the basis for the flights of fantasy – yet taken in small doses (the kaleidoscopic, perhaps slightly gimmicky range of sounds and textures can actually begin to become rather same-y in its own way if one attempts to digest it all in one go). Original, exciting and a refreshing change from some of the more po-faced renditions around, these are certainly convincing as a latter-day reflection of the cultural cross-fertilisation at play within the music. **CG**

REVIEWERS: Nicholas Anderson, Catherine Groom, Tiffany Hore, Adrian Horsewood, Graham Lock, Caroline Ritchie, Brian Robins

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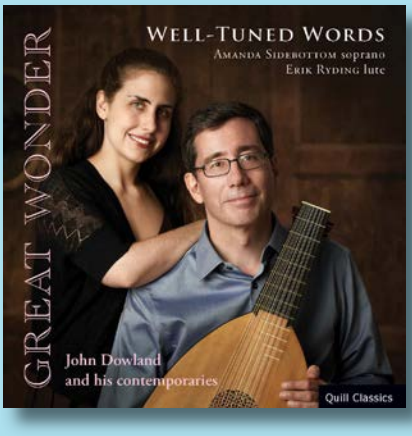

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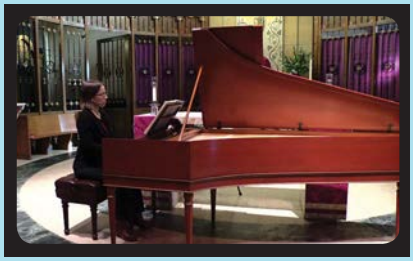

VIDEOS
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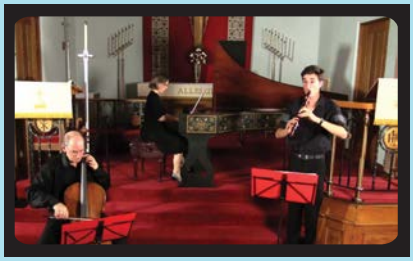

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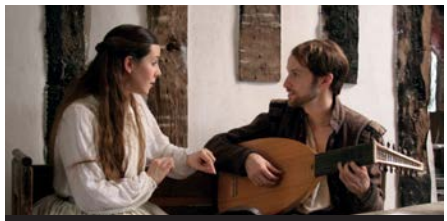
FILM

Draw on Sweet Night
Tony Britten (d)
Capriol Films
DVD available late 2015

For want of a true narrative to connect the scant biographical details of madrigal composer John Wilbye (1574–1638), Tony Britten's film *Draw on Sweet Night*, conjectures a life of passion and womanising. The composer of the title madrigal worked for the recusant Kytson family at Hengrave Hall by Bury St Edmunds, Suffolk. When Lady Kytson died, he inherited a sheep farm and moved in with her daughter. That much is known. Britten, who is writer, director, producer and part-composer, imagines sexual relations with both mother and daughter (fortunately not simultaneously) as well as with the wife-to-be of fellow composer George Kirbye and a passing visitor who sings and composes herself. There is some confusion over which, if any, of these partners is most dear to Wilbye, while a political subplot suggests her ladyship is trying to extract from him a Latin mass. Another has the action flitting between then and now, the present enacted by members of the vocal ensemble I Fagiolini as they perform the soundtrack comprising both Wilbye's madrigals and Britten's dissonant contemporary response to them. Britten's dialogue in clever cod-Elizabethan has no depth. As for the cast, Mark Arends' serious Wilbye seems an unlikely stud and the love-scenes with the four females, Doon Mackichan, Ania Sowinski, Sophia di Martino and Milanka Brooks are unconvincing if not slightly embarrassing. It is beautifully shot at Kentwell Hall, as the real Grade 1-listed Hengrave Hall has been turned into a modern wedding venue. **RJ**



Mark Arends and Sophia di Martino

SHEET MUSIC

J.S. Bach: Ascension Oratorio
Bärenreiter TP 1011
J.S. Bach: O Jesu Christ, meins Lebens Licht
Breitkopf & Härtel 4618
J.S. Bach: St Matthew Passion (Mendelssohn versions)
Bärenreiter BA 9088
Handel: Solomon
Bärenreiter BA 10709
Pergolesi: Stabat mater (facsimile)
Edition Walhall EW 880

The funeral hymn 'O Jesu Christ, meins Lebens Licht' is an oddity among Bach's sacred vocal works: in one movement and just over 100 bars long, it was grouped together with the cantatas in the 19th-century (hence its BWV number of 118), but several scholars since have suggested reclassifying it as either a motet or a work for a special occasion. It has also caused puzzlement in its employment of two 'liuti' in its scoring, instruments which have resisted modern attempts to identify them. Wolfram Enßlin's excellent notes cover these and other issues, and Breitkopf's new Urtext edition presents each of the two sources in a clear, unfussy score that I hope will encourage more performances of this short yet moving piece.

Although its title might suggest similar classification vagaries, the *Ascension* Oratorio (BWV 11) is — unlike the *Christmas* Oratorio — comparable in scale to many of the sacred cantatas, although its grand scoring clearly indicates the importance of the liturgical occasion for which it was composed. This new study score of the work — derived from the Neue Bach-Ausgabe — is a useful companion to the already available vocal score, and maintains Bärenreiter's usual high standards in its Bach scores, although I wish that publishers would find it in them to print the full text of a work separately from the music (Bärenreiter is far from the only culprit on this count).

Felix Mendelssohn's role in the 'rediscovery' and rehabilitation of Bach's *St Matthew Passion* is well-known, although there have been few recordings (see page 39 for a review of the most recent) and even fewer editions. Hence, this new one from Bärenreiter is valuable and to be welcomed. Details of the alterations (e.g. rewriting some of the Evangelist's part to lower the overall tessitura) and cuts that Mendelssohn made are clearly laid out in the introductory notes; sadly, where the vocal score, at least, falls down, is in its cramped layout (particularly in the choruses — the lettering is too large) and its clumsy note and text spacing, which combine to give several awkward-looking passages.

Solomon was one of Handel's last oratorios, written to commemorate a prolonged period of peace brought about by George II; richly scored both vocally and instrumentally, it has long been one of the composer's most popular works. The Halle Handel Edition, of which this release is a part, has been ongoing since 1955, and Hans Dieter Clausen's edition of *Solomon* was published last year. I'd say that it immediately becomes the first-choice edition for the work, as much on its own merits as the lack of good alternatives; however, potential performers might be put off by a retail price of £41.50 for the vocal score.

Finally, not an edition but a fascinating document: a full-colour facsimile of Pergolesi's masterpiece, the *Stabat mater*, the autograph of which is preserved at the Abbey of Monte Cassino in Italy. The quality of the photography and printing is excellent, allowing us to examine closely various additions and alterations made in the course of the work's composition, during the composer's last weeks of life; indeed, I daresay a continuo player would even be able to perform directly from this edition for almost the entirety of the work. **AH**

REVIEWERS: Adrian Horsewood, Rick Jones

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PERFORMANCES

Les Arts Florissants, Dans les Jardins de William Christie

JULIEN GAZEAU

DANS LES JARDINS DE WILLIAM CHRISTIE, THÉÂTRE DE CAEN, FRANCE

Thirty years ago William Christie bought a run-down 17th-century house in the village of Thiré in the Vendée region of France, which came with around two hectares of land. I can still recall a conversation between two elderly ladies standing in a stables area of the house just a few weeks later. 'I believe an American has bought it,' said one. The other chuckled, 'He's mad.' How mistaken she was, for within three decades Christie has entirely restored the house, which is now listed among the Historic Monuments of France, has increased the land to 12 hectares and has created a glorious garden designated by the French State as a 'jardin remarquable.'

Amid hedges of hornbeam and box, Christie has set his annual festival of music in the Vendée, 'Dans les Jardins de William Christie.' 2015 has been the Festival's fourth and most ambitious year, highlights of which were fully staged excerpts from Campra's opéra-ballet *Les Fêtes vénitiennes* and a musical potpourri 'In an Italian Garden'. Each was presented on a dais erected over a reflecting pool. As the dusk gathered, the surrounding groves were discreetly lit to create a magical setting intensified at the concluding concert by the light of a full moon in a cloudless sky.

While the staged presentations on the Reflecting Pool provided a focal point of the festival, a wealth of other musical events contributed to its pleasingly informal character. Several concerts take place in the nearby village church. An evening of Charpentier was directed by Christie himself while Paul Agnew, associate musical director of Les Arts Florissants, conducted music by Wert, Rore and Byrd. A unique feature of the festival was a nightly candlelit meditation in the church during which Agnew directed and sang in music by Tallis, Dowland, Purcell and Lalande; among the other participants were Juliette Perret (soprano), who sang Lalande's 'Miserere', and lutenist Thomas Dunford.

During the afternoons there were musical workshops, opportunities to meet the artists, guided tours of the gardens and a variety of 'Promenades musicales', which were 15-minute programmes performed in different locations in the gardens where visitors could gather informally to hear and see music and dancing. My own highlights included arias by Vivaldi, sung by mezzo-soprano Emilie Renard, one-time member of Christie's academy for young singers, Le Jardin des Voix, and a sonata for two unaccompanied violins by Leclair played by Catherine Girard and Emmanuel Resche, both members of Les Arts Florissants. A particularly memorable moment in the concluding concert on the reflecting pool was Handel's 'Lascia la spina' from *Il trionfo del Tempo e del Disinganno* sung with clarity and youthful ingenuousness by soprano Lucía Martín-Cartón, a finalist in the 2015 Le Jardin des Voix.

Here, in summary, is a festival that will grow in stature and influence and will be very soon, if not already, on the main music festival circuit. **NA**

TALLIS SCHOLARS, 2000TH CONCERT, ST JOHN'S SMITH SQUARE, 21 SEPTEMBER

Well into the second half of this landmark occasion came the shock: at the close of William Byrd's *Infelix ego*, an ever so slightly scruffy cadence. A shock because of the trademark Tallis Scholars immaculacy that had preceded it, through the twists and turns of John Taverner's *Leroy Kyrie,* the many-splendoured *Missa Cantate* of John Sheppard and the complexities in Gabriel Jackson's ear-catching *Ave Dei patris filia,* written for the Scholars. More than obvious that the Scholars continue to set new standards, 42 years after their first faltering steps in 1973. Would that St John's Smith Square had been packed to the rafters to appreciate that fact and join in this celebration for one of the world's great musical ensembles of any genre.

In truth, there are more easeful acoustics than St John's for vocal music of this scale – Radio 3 listeners to the live broadcast had the best deal in terms of pure sound. But the experience of those two thousand concerts was evident from first note to last in the way the singers drew the audience into their space rather than straining to conquer that acoustic.

Tallis himself was absent from the scheduled programme, but Scholars founder/director Peter Phillips was across that. As an encore there came the delectable *Miserere nostri*, delivered with breathtaking control, after which a rare Scholars excursion into the late 19th-early 20th-century British musical renaissance with Stanford's ever-enchanting *The Blue Bird*. Captivating, even if the bird could have done with a ceiling a few metres higher to flutter and flute around in. **AG**

ARTUR PIZARRO, FINCHCOCKS MUSICAL MUSEUM, 3 OCTOBER 2015

Four days after he delighted a Rhinegold Live audience in London,

Artur Pizarro appeared at Finchcocks in Kent before another sell-out crowd. (Pizarro had, in fact, returned to Portugal in between the two concerts and only flew in that day to travel to this magnificent Georgian house with its famed collection of historical keyboard instruments.)

We learnt that once the tuners had finished their work that morning, they would not be returning: what this meant, particularly at this time of year with temperatures fluctuating, was that Pizarro could not risk playing the pianos before the recital for more than a couple of minutes each, which helped to determine what was going to be a unique experience.

A decision was taken there and then to perform Schumann's Sonata no. 1 — composed in the early 1830s — on a 1826 Conrad Graf fortepiano in order to maximise the chances of the Pleyel and Erard pianos staying in tune. I am going to stick my neck out and assert that the range of effects, dynamics and timbres Pizarro produced for this large-scale emotionally complex piece could not be achieved on a modern piano. He discovered the music, responding spontaneously to what the instrument told him it could do; as a result, the introspective brooding and mysterious qualities of the movements arose entirely naturally, the space given to the frequent changes in mood rendered them compelling and the melodies sang out characterfully whether above or below the alternating driving rhythmic chordal or lighter arpeggio passages.

The Brahms *Walzer* op. 39 were played on the Erard grand piano of 1866. The intervening years and different approach to piano-making between the Graf and the London factory Erard had left their mark and there was almost a sense of something having been lost; it was already sounding less versatile, more uniform in tone. For period piano lovers, Brahms is perhaps the trickiest to pull off on a modern piano: the thick, often closely-packed chordal writing can be overpowering on a big modern instrument even in the most capable hands. Pizarro coped very well and brought out the playfulness in the music as well as ensuring that grandness and hushed intimacy filled the long hall as appropriate.

The Pleyel of 1842 was chosen for Chopin's *Andante Spianato* and *Polonaise Brilliante* and the composer's word is good enough for me that this piano-maker was his preferred. Pizarro's performance was beautiful — full of humour, virtuosic bravado and glittering colours. Liszt provided the encores: *Gnomenreigen* worked well on the Erard, as light as air at the top and as rumbling at the bottom, as you could want and a gentle, glassy and poignant *Liebestraum* no. 3 brought this dream recital to a close. **ST**

BRECON BAROQUE FESTIVAL

Inspired by performing at the Leipzig Bach Festival earlier this year, violinist Rachel Podger brought a little bit of the city to the heart of Wales over the weekend of 23–26 October, choosing to focus on some of the greatest works of Bach's maturity when creating the programme for her own Brecon Baroque Festival.

A well-received performance of the *St John* Passion opened proceedings on the first night in Brecon Cathedral, conducted by Mark Duthie and featuring soloists Nils Giebelhausen (Evangelist), Nicholas Gedge (Christus), Alison Hill, Robin Blaze and Giles Underwood, and Podger's Brecon Baroque ensemble, which performed *The Art of Fugue* on the following evening.

John Butt joined ensemble member Alison McGillivray, playing a five-stringed cello, for Sunday evening's programme of a selection of preludes and fugues from *The Well-Tempered Clavier*, the solo cello suite BWV 1012, and the sonata in G minor BWV 1029. The clean acoustic and good sightlines in the auditorium of the new arts centre at Christ College, Brecon gave this concert a rare intimacy, enhanced by the performers' engaging introductions and virtuosic playing.

There was a baroque dance workshop and tea dance, as well as tours of the cathedral and the ancient monastic buildings of Christ College, plus a re-creation of Leipzig's Café Zimmerman in Brecon's Muse arts centre, with local players providing the music while café patrons tucked in to coffee and cakes.

The festival closed on Monday evening in the town's canal-side Theatr Brycheiniog with a deeply rewarding collaboration between the Brecon Baroque Festival Orchestra – which included students from the Royal Welsh College of Music and Drama, local amateurs and teachers, Rachel Podger's internationally-known colleagues – and the South Powys Youth Orchestra.

South Powys Youth Orchestra receives a small but declining grant from Powys County Council, and Podger and husband-cum-conductor Tim Cronin have set up a 'Mozart Music Fund' to provide support for families who are unable to fund tuition. Seeing how successfully this project seems to have been stitched into their festival – both in terms of repertoire and community involvement – provided an encouraging glimpse of a genuinely inclusive initiative. **CS**

The Tallis Scholars

© ERIC RICHMOND

REVIEWERS: Nicholas Anderson, Andrew Green, Clare Stevens, Stephen Turvey

LISTINGS

5 TOP *EVENTS NOT TO MISS*

WINTER BLUES GETTING YOU DOWN? OUR RECOMMENDATIONS FOR THE SEASON ARE SURE TO LIFT YOU UP

L'ARCADIA

6 December, St Margaret's Church, York

Part of the York Early Music Christmas Festival, soprano Ulrike Hofbauer joins Martin Jopp on baroque violin to bring audiences the 'Thomaskirche Contenders'. This concert features sonatas and cantatas from Bach, Telemann, Graupner and Fasch, creating a real Christmassy feel in York.

FRETWORK: TAVERNER & TAVENER

18 December, Kings Place: Hall One, London

From one John T to another: Sir John Tavener, descendant of 16th-century composer John Taverner, wrote *Nipson* for Fretwork before his recent death. This concert features countertenor Iestyn Davies and Nicholas Daniel on oboe in a celebration of the two composers.

CHRISTMAS CRACKER

19 December, Cadogan Hall, London

The Royal Philharmonic Orchestra is back with their popular Christmas Cracker in London. With Nick David as conductor and featuring vocalists Lance Ellington and Anna-Jane Casey as new Philharmonic talent, the Cracker will celebrate the spirit of Christmas with traditional Yuletide cheer and the hauntingly beautiful sound of the Philharmonic.

HANDEL'S DIXIT DOMINUS

6 February, Peterborough Cathedral

Touring the UK in celebration of Handel's colourful *Dixit Dominus*, the Sixteen will be exploring the Italian styles that influenced Handel. With Harry Christophers as conductor, sopranos Grace Davidson and Charlotte Mobbs will be joining the Sixteen, and Katy Hill will be singing alto.

MAGIC HANDEL

26 February, Town Hall, Birmingham

Harry Bicket and the English Concert bring Handel's fantastical opera *Orlando* to life. Iestyn Davies takes the title role, a Christian general desperately in love with the pagan Dorinda (sung by Carolyn Sampson); others in the starry cast include Kyle Ketelsen, Erin Morley and Sasha Cooke.

DECEMBER 2015–FEBRUARY 2016 EVENTS

NORTH

GATESHEAD

The Sage

0191 443 4661, www.thesagegateshead.org

Handel *Messiah:* Mary Bevan (sop), Paula Murrihy (m-sop), Joshua Ellicott (ten), David Soar (bass), Royal Northern Sinfonia, Chorus of Royal Northern Sinfonia, Harry Bicket (d).

19 December: 7.30pm

MANCHESTER

Bridgewater Hall

0161 907 9000, www.bridgewater-hall.co.uk

Vivaldi Concerto for violino in tromba marina, strings & continuo in D, RV 221, Concerto for bassoon, strings & continuo in g, RV 496, Concerto for violino in tromba marina, strings & continuo in G, RV 311, Concerto *La Notte* for bassoon, strings & continuo in B flat, RV 501, *Le Quattro Stagioni* (Manchester version); Adrian Chandler (d, vln, vln in tromba marina), Peter Whelan (bassoon).

19 February: 7.30pm

YORK

National Centre for Early Music

01904 658338, www.ncem.co.uk

Muffat Sonata 5 in G from Armonico Tributo, Biber Sonata X in G minor & Sonata IV in C from *Sonatae tam aris quam aulis servientes* (Paul Bosworth, natural tr), Marcello Concerto for oboe and strings in D minor (Tatjana Zimre, oboe), Telemann Overture, Suite & Conclusion in D from *Tafelmusik* II TWV55:D1 & TWV50:D9, European Union Baroque Orchestra, Lars Ulrik Mortensen (d, hpsd), Aira Maria Lehtipuu (concertmaster).

4 December: 7.30pm

Traditional wassails, medieval carols, sizzling fidels, dulcet harp, virtuoso percussion, bells, bagpipes and voices enable Joglaresa to ring in Christmas and New Year. Belinda Sykes (voice, bagpipes), Sianed Jones (voice, fidel), Angela Hicks (voice, harp), May Robertson (fidel, voice), Louise Morgan (percussion, voice).

8 December: 7.30pm

Byrd Mass for Four Voices, Great Service (*Magnificat & Nunc dimittis*), Gibbons *This is the record of John*, *See, see the Word is incarnate*, Tallis *Videte miraculum*, Sheppard *Verbum caro*; Ex Cathedra Consort, Jeffrey Skidmore (d), James Johnstone (org).

11 December: 7.30pm

MIDLANDS

BIRMINGHAM

Town Hall

0121 345 0603, www.thsh.co.uk

Bach *Christmas* Oratorio; Ex Cathedra Choir & Baroque Orchestra, Jeffrey Skidmore (d), Katie Trethewey, Amy Wood (sop), Harriet Hougham Slade, Martha McLorinan (alto), Jeremy Budd (ten), Greg Skidmore (bass).

6 December: 4pm

Handel *Orlando*; The English Concert, The Choir of The English Concert, Harry Bicket (d, hpsd), Iestyn Davies (Orlando), Carolyn Sampson (Dorinda), Erin Morley (Angelica), Kyle Ketelsen (Zoroastro), Sasha Cooke (Medoro).

26 February: 6.30pm

COVENTRY

Cathedral

01904 658338, www.ncem.co.uk

Handel *Arrival of the Queen of Sheba* from *Solomon, Let God Arise, Let thy Hand be Strengthened*, Overture to Jephtha, *Dixit Dominus*; Harry Christophers (d), The Sixteen, Grace Davidson, Charlotte Mobbs (sop), Katy Hill (alto), Jeremy Budd, Simon Berridge (ten), Ben Davies (bass).
4 February: 7.30pm

DERBY

Cathedral
01904 658338, www.ncem.co.uk
Handel *Arrival of the Queen of Sheba* from *Solomon, Let God Arise, Let thy Hand be Strengthened*, Overture to Jephtha, *Dixit Dominus*; Harry Christophers (d), The Sixteen, Grace Davidson, Charlotte Mobbs (sop), Katy Hill (alto), Jeremy Budd, Simon Berridge (ten), Ben Davies (bass).
5 February: 7.30pm

MALVERN

Theatres
01684 892277, www.malvern-theatres.co.uk
Bach, *Christmas* Oratorio Nos I, III, V, VI; Armonico Consort and Baroque Orchestra, Christopher Monks (d), Gillian Keith (sop), William Towers (c-t), Nathan Vale (ten), Sir Willard White (bass).
5 December: 7.45pm
In a new programme inspired by the coronation ceremonies of 16th-century Venice, experience the 16 part 'surround sound' polychoral works of Gabrieli and some of his simpler motets; Armonico Consort and Orchestra, Christopher Monks (d), The English Cornett and Sackbut Ensemble.
6 February: 7.45pm

NORTHAMPTON

Guildhall
01327 360931, www.fiori-musicali.com
Handel *Messiah;* Fiori Musicali.
23 December: 7pm

NOTTINGHAM

Theatre Royal
0115 989 5555, www.trch.co.uk
Focusing on the relationship between the Virgin Mother and Child, the Sixteen contrast the sounds of early Renaissance polyphony with music by some of today's most admired composers; The Sixteen, Harry Christophers (d).
18 December: 7.30pm

SOUTHWELL

Minster
01636 812649, www.southwellminster.org
Padilla *Missa ego flos campi*, Victoria *O magnum mysterium*, Fernandes *Xicochi*, English 16th-century Coventry Carol, Bach *In dulci jubilo*; Ex Cathedra Consort, Jeffrey Skidmore (d).
10 December: 7.30pm

WARWICK

Warwick Arts Centre
024 7652 4524, warwickartscentre.co.uk
Bach, *Christmas* Oratorio Nos I, III, V, VI; Armonico Consort and Baroque Orchestra, Christopher Monks (d), Gillian Keith (sop), William Towers (c-t), Nathan Vale (ten), Sir Willard White (bass).
20 December: 7.30pm

St Mary's Church
0844 581 0750, www.stmaryswarwick.org.uk
In a new programme inspired by the coronation ceremonies of 16th-century Venice, experience the 16 part 'surround sound' polychoral works of Gabrieli and some of his simpler motets; Armonico Consort and Orchestra, Christopher Monks (d), The English Cornett and Sackbut Ensemble.
30 January, 7.30pm

WOLVERHAMPTON

St Peter's Church
0121 345 0603, excathedra.co.uk
Padilla *Missa ego flos campi*, Victoria *O magnum mysterium*, Fernandes *Xicochi*, English 16th-century Coventry Carol, Bach *In dulci jubilo*; Ex Cathedra Consort, Jeffrey Skidmore (d).
2 December: 7.30pm

WORCESTER

Cathedral
01904 658338, www.ncem.co.uk
Handel *Arrival of the Queen of Sheba* from *Solomon, Let God Arise, Let thy Hand be Strengthened*, Overture to Jephtha, *Dixit Dominus*; Harry Christophers (d), The Sixteen, Grace Davidson, Charlotte Mobbs (sop), Katy Hill (alto), Jeremy Budd, Simon Berridge (ten), Ben Davies (bass).
24 February: 7.30pm

LONDON

Barbican Hall
020 7638 8891, www.barbican.org.uk
Handel *Messiah*; Carolyn Sampson (sop), Iestyn Davies (c-t), Allan Clayton (ten), Christopher Purves (bass), Britten Sinfonia Voices, Britten Sinfonia, Eamonn Dougan (d).
15 December: 7.30pm
Bach *Christmas* Oratorio; Academy of Ancient Music, Susan Gritton (sop), Barbara Kozelj (m-sop), James Gilchrist (ten), Ashley Riches (bass), Richard Egarr (d, hpsd).
22 December: 7pm
Charpentier, Mozart, Handel, Pachelbel, JS. Bach, Clarke, Vivaldi; Mozart Festival Orchestra (in full 18th-century costume), David Juritz (d, vln), Mary Bevan (sop), Crispian Steele-Perkins (tr).
27 December: 2.30pm

Barbican Milton Court Concert Hall
020 7638 8891, www.barbican.org.uk
Padilla *Missa ego flos campi*, Victoria *O magnum mysterium*, Fernandes *Xicochi*, English 16th-century Coventry Carol, Bach *In dulci jubilo*; Ex Cathedra Consort, Jeffrey Skidmore (d).
5 December: 7.30pm

Cadogan Hall
020 7730 4500, www.cadoganhall.com
Focusing on the relationship between the Virgin Mother and Child, the Sixteen contrast the sounds of early Renaissance polyphony with music by some of today's most admired composers; The Sixteen, Harry Christophers (d).
16 December: 7.30pm
Handel *Arrival of the Queen of Sheba* from *Solomon, Let God Arise, Let thy Hand be Strengthened*, Overture to Jephtha, *Dixit Dominus*; Harry Christophers (d), The Sixteen, Grace Davidson, Charlotte Mobbs (sop), Katy Hill (alto), Jeremy Budd, Simon Berridge (ten), Ben Davies (bass).
8 February: 7.30pm

Handel House
020 7399 1953, www.handelhouse.org

ORCHESTRA OF ST JOHN'S
The Orchestra of St John's will be performing Handel's *Messiah* this winter

BLOCK4 present a programme of arrangements for the recorder quartet, ranging from the medieval period to the present day. Works by composers such as Handel and Caccini are re-imagined by the quartet, showcasing the versatility of the recorder; Emily Bannister, Lucy Carr, Katie Cowling, Rosie Land (rec).
3 December: 6.30pm
Flautotonic's concert of Christmas music from around the world, including Handel, Corelli, Purcell and Pierpont; David Beaney (rec, fl), Lauren Brant (rec), Rebecca McChrystal (percussion), Claire Williams (hpsd).
6 December: 2pm
British Harpsichord Society programme performed by Julian Perkins celebrates the daredevil hand-crossings, unpredictable figurations and plunges into exotic harmonies and rhythmic dances to create music that is both theatrical and virtuosic.
8 December: 6.30pm
Handel House celebrates the new Handel House Talent Scheme and our Composer-in-Residence Apprentice with music of the baroque period and of the present day, injected with festive carols and ditties to sing along to; Cathy Bell (m-sop), Edwin Hillier (Composer-in-Residence Apprentice), Katarzyna Kowalik (hpsd), Caoimhe de Paor (rec), Marie van Rhijn (hpsd), Elspeth Robertson (rec), George Ross (cello).
10 December: 6.30pm
The Amadè Players present an evening of seasonal music featuring Rebecca Ramsey (sop), George Clifford (vln) and others. Arias by Handel and from Christmas cantatas by Bach and Scarlatti.
13 December: 2pm
Ballo Baroque offer selections from some of Handel's works that had January premieres in London: *Poro* (1731), *Ottone* (1723), and *Partenope* (1731). Other winter works by composer Antonio Lotti are explored. Randall Scotting (c-t), Magdalena Loth-Hill (vln), Yu-Wei Hu (fl), Lucia Capellaro (cello), Nathaniel Mander (hpsd).
17 December: 6.30pm
A talk that will explore the main themes covered in the current exhibition 'Handel: A Life with Friends'.
19 December: 3pm
A new arrangement of Handel's *Music for the Royal Fireworks* is framed by two of the 18th century's most flamboyant harpsichord suites. Nathaniel Mander (hpsd) performs.
31 December: 4pm

ŁUKASZ RAJCHERT

Randall Scotting of Ballo Baroque

Kings Place
0844 264 0321, www.kingsplace.co.uk
The Sixteen offers a selection of music centred on the theme of Advent including music by Tallis, Tavener, Skempton, Pärt, Mouton and more; the Sixteen, Harry Christophers (d).
10 December: 7.30pm
'Baroque on the Edge' offers a dizzying programme of music from France, Germany and Italy, including well known pieces like Corelli's variations on *La Folia*, Gluck's *Dance of the Blessed Spirits*, and Vivaldi, combined with lesser known works by French baroque masters such as Royer, Durante and Forqueray.; Red Priest.
13 December: 6.30pm
Grandi, Monteverdi, Cavali; Orchestra and Choir of the Age of Enlightenment, Robert Howarth (d).
14 January: 7.30pm
Study day 'All about baroque'. Join Orchestra of the Age of Enlightenment Chief Executive Crispin Woodhead and members of the orchestra for the essential all-singing, all-dancing guide to everything baroque. Wigs not required.
16 January: 10.30am

LSO St Lukes
020 7638 8891, lso.co.uk/lso-st-luke-s
'Shakespeare on my mind' – Shakespeare-related songs and lute solos by Robert Johnson, John Banister, Thomas Morley and Henry Purcell, inspired by the great poet-playwright in his 400th anniversary year. Iestyn Davies (c-t), Elizabeth Kenny (lt).
14 January: 1pm

Royal Festival Hall
0844 875 0073, www.southbankcentre.co.uk
Messiah: Mozart Festival Orchestra in full 18th century costume, Oliver Gooch (d), Soraya Mafi (sop), Anna Harvey (m-sop), Andrew Dickinson (ten), James Platt (bass), Bach Choir.
12 December: 7.30pm
Brahms, *Variations on a theme of Haydn*, Schumann Violin Concerto, Symphony no. 3; Orchestra of the Age of Enlightenment, Marin Alsop (d), Patricia Kopatchinskaja (vln).
6 February: 7pm
Compulsive lyres and fowl play; music by Haydn, Mozart, Chevalier de Saint-Georges, Beethoven; Orchestra of the Age of Enlightenment, Sir Roger Norrington (d), Lisa Beznosiuk (fl), Frances Kelly (harp).
14 February: 7.30pm
Who knew that the baroque period could be so rich in child-friendly tunes? Join the Orchestra of the Age of Enlightenment for Baroque TOTS, designed especially for the youngest of music lovers.
27 February: 10.30am & 12pm

Sam Wanamaker Playhouse
0207 401 9919, www.shakespeares-globe.org
Violin sonatas by Biber and Geminiani, songs from Handel, Purcell and Dowland, works for cello by Telemann and many more; The English Concert, Harry Bicket (d, hpsd), Mark Padmore (ten), Nadja Zwiener (vln), Joseph Crouch (cello), William Carter (lt).
6 December: 7pm

St John's Smith Square
020 7222 1061, www.sjss.org.uk
Muffat Sonata 5 in G from Armonico Tributo, Biber Sonata X in g minor & Sonata IV in C from *Sonatae tam aris quam aulis servientes* (Paul Bosworth, natural tr), Marcello Contero for oboe and strings in d minor (Tatjana Zimre, oboe), Telemann Overture, Suite & Conclusion in D from *Tafelmusik* II TWV55:D1 & TWV50:D9, European Union Baroque Orchestra, Lars Ulrik Mortensen (d, hpsd), Aira Maria Lehtipuu (concertmaster).
3 December: 7.30pm

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Handel *Messiah;* Orchestra of St John's, OSJ Voices, Ellie Edmonds (m-sop), Peter Kirk (ten), Bozidar Smiljanic (bass), John Lubbock (d).
10 December: 8pm
A programme of Christmas music from the Chapel Royal Choirs of England and Philip of Spain celebrating English and Spanish music from the 6th century; Chapelle Du Roi.
12 December: 7.30pm
Roderick Williams *O Adonai, et dux domus*, Sheppard *Salvator mundi*, Howells *Sing lullaby*, Byrd *Lullaby my sweet little babe*, Leighton *A Hymn of the Nativity*, Warlock *Bethlehem down*, Trad. *Coventry Carol* arr. Richard Allain, David Lang *The Little Match Girl Passion*. Siglo de Oro, Patrick Allies (d).
13 December: 7.30pm
Arvo Pärt *Sieben Magnificat Antiphonen*, *Magnificat*, *I am the true vine*, Sheppard *Sacris solemniis*,Tallis Gloria and Sanctus from *Missa Puer natus est nobis,* Sheppard *Gaude, gaude, gaude*, Tallis Agnus Dei from *Missa Puer natus est nobis*; The Tallis Scholars, Peter Phillips (d).
19 December: 7.30pm
Schelle *Machet die Tore weit*, Kuhnau *Magnificat*, Bach *Magnificat* BWV243a; Solomon's Knot.
21 December: 7.30pm
Bach, Mass in B minor; Katherine Watson (sop), Iestyn Davies (c-t), Gwilym Bowen (ten), Neal Davies (bass), Stephen Layton (d), Orchestra of the Age of Enlightenment.
22 December, 7.30pm
Handel *Messiah*; Katherine Watson (sop), Iestyn Davies (c-t), Gwilym Bowen (ten), Neal Davies (bass), Polyphony, Orchestra of the Age of Enlightenment, Stephen Layton (d).
23 December: 7.30pm
Vivaldi *Gloria*, 'Gelido in ogni vena' from *Il Farnace*, 'Agitata da due venti' from *Griselda*, Handel 'Da tempeste' from *Giulio Cesare*, Gloria, Dixit Dominus; La Nuova Musica, David Peter Bates (d), Sophie Bevan (sop).
4 February: 7.30pm
J S Bach, C.P.E. Bach, Telemann; Tabea Debus (rec), Lea Rahel Bader (bar cello), Johannes Lang (hpsd).
9 February: 7.30pm

Wigmore Hall
020 7935 2141,
www.wigmore-hall.org.uk
Italian dances of the Venetian renaissance: Jordi Savall (d, treble viol), Hespèrion XXI.
13 December: 7.30pm
Cesti *Orontea*: La Nuova Musica, David Peter Bates (d).
14 December: 7.30pm
Schütz Geistliche Chormusik op. 11, Christopher Fox *Trostlieder (in Widerwärtigkeit des Kriegs)* (world première); EXAUDI, James Weeks (d).
20 December: 7.30pm
Traditional Catalan and Mallorcan songs and dances provide the departure point for this programme by L'Arpeggiata, Christina Pluhar (d, theo), Núria Rial (sop).
21 December: 7.30pm
French sacred music of the 17th-century for the Christmas Season; Ensemble Correspondances, Sébastien Daucé (d, hpsd, org).
23 December: 7.30pm
Max Emanuel Cencic (c-t) with George Petrou's Armonia Atenea and Theodoros Kitsos (mandolin) with a programme of operatic arias and other works by Johann Adolf Hasse.
28 December: 7.30pm
J.C. Bach, Symphony in E flat op.6 no.3, C.P.E. Bach, Concerto in C for fortepiano and strings, W.A. Mozart, Piano Concerto in No.9 *Jeunehomme* in E flat, Symphony no. 15 in G; The English Concert, Kristian Bezuidenhout (d, f-piano).
8 January: 7.30pm
Vivaldi Concerto for violino in tromba marina, strings & continuo in D, RV 221, Concerto for bassoon, strings & continuo in g, RV 496, Concerto for violino in tromba marina, strings & continuo in G, RV 311, Concerto *La Notte* for bassoon, strings & continuo in B flat, RV 501, *Le Quattro Stagioni* (Manchester version); Adrian Chandler (d, vln, vln in tromba marina), Peter Whelan (bassoon).
15 January: 7.30pm

ISLINGTON

Union Chapel,
020 7226 3750,
www.unionchapel.org.uk
Handel *Messiah*; Graham Ross (d), Elin Manahan Thomas (sop), Christopher Ainslie (c-t), Nicholas Mulroy (ten), Alexander Ashworth (bass), Choir of Clare College, Cambridge, Orchestra of the Age of Enlightenment.
3 December: 6.30pm

SPITALFIELDS

Christ Church
020 7377 1362,
www.spitalfieldsmusic.org.uk
Charpentier Cantata *Nativiatatem Domine Nostri* H.414, Stradella *Ah! Troppo è ver;* The English Concert; Harry Bicket (d, org).
9 December: 7pm
Monteverdi Madrigals from Books 1, 2, 3; Les Arts Florissants, Paul Agnew (d, ten), Miriam Allan, Maud Gnidzaz (sop), Mélodie Ruvio (m-sop), Sean Clayton (ten).
10 December: 7pm
Focusing on the relationship between the Virgin Mother and Child, the Sixteen contrast the sounds of early Renaissance polyphony with music by some of today's most admired composers; the Sixteen, Harry Christophers (d).
12 December: 7pm

SOUTH EAST

BASINGSTOKE

The Anvil
01256 844244,
www.anvilarts.org.uk
Brahms *Variations on a theme of Haydn*, Schumann Violin Concerto, Symphony no. 3; Orchestra of the Age of Enlightenment, Marin Alsop (d), Patricia Kopatchinskaja (vln).
4 February: 7.45pm

CAMBRIDGE

Great St Mary's Church
01223 847330, www.CambridgeEarlyMusic.org
Celebrate Yule with Joglaresa with traditional carols, lullabies, dance tunes and wassails from Ireland, Scotland, England and Wales. With fidel, harp, bells, bagpipes and voices, Joglaresa ring in Christmas and New Year.
18 December: 7.30pm

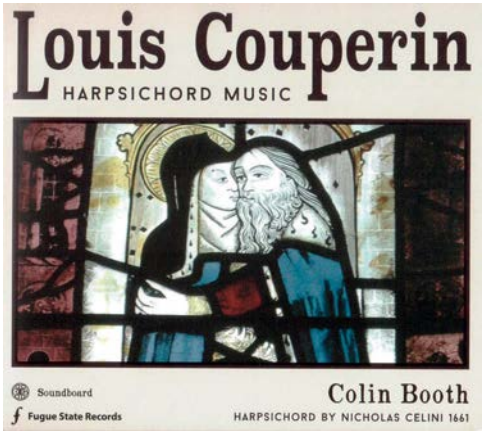
Emmanuel United Reformed Church
01223 847330,
www.cambridgeearlymusic.org
Magnificat brings to life compositions inspired by Girolamo Savonarola, the 15th-century Dominican friar, who preached passionately for political, social and spiritual reform in Florence.
26 February: 7.30pm

CHELMSFORD

Cathedral
01245 294492,
www.chelmsfordcathedral.org.uk
Handel *Messiah*; Harlow Chorus, Alexander Chaplin (d), Agréable Charivari Simfonie, Richard Wade (ldr).
12 December: 7.30pm

CHICHESTER

Cathedral
01243 782595,
www.chichestercathedral.org.uk
Handel *Arrival of the Queen of Sheba* from *Solomon, Let God Arise*, *Let thy Hand be Strengthened*, Overture to Jephtha, *Dixit Dominus*; Harry Christophers (d), The Sixteen, Grace Davidson, Charlotte Mobbs (sop), Katy Hill (alto), Jeremy Budd, Simon Berridge (ten), Ben Davies (bass).
25 February: 7.30pm



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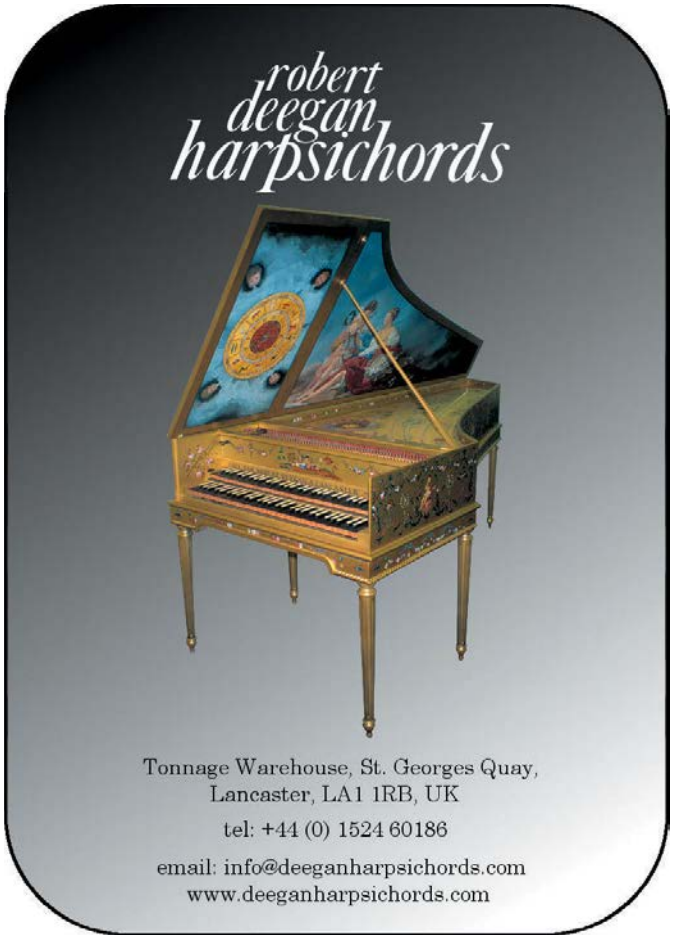

The Assembly Room
01243 788502, www.chichesterchamberconcerts.com
Handel, Veracini, Caldara, Corelli, Carbonelli; Adrian Chandler, Camilla Scarlett (vln), Gareth Deats (cello), Robert Howarth (hpsd).
3 December: 7.30pm

EAST BERGOLT

St Mary's Church
01787 210091, www.suffolkvillagesfestival.com
Michael Praetorius, Joan Cererols, Heinrich Biber, Marc-Antoine Charpentier, Henry Purcell, Antonio Vivaldi, George Frideric Handel, attrib. J.S. Bach; Claire Tomlin (sop), Katie Cowling (rec), Psalmody, children's choir from local schools, The Fret Knots viol consort, The John Jenkins Consort, Peter Holman (d).
13 December: 6pm

HITCHIN

Benslow Music Trust
01462 459446, www.benslow.org
A course for pre-formed baroque chamber groups led by Theresa Caudle, Mark Caudle, Alastair Ross, Stephen Preston, Kate Latham.
7 or 8–10 January.
Consorting viols: a course focussing on the repertoire of 16th-17th century consort viol music. Standard: advanced, upper intermediate: Alison Crum, Roy Marks (tutors).
18–21 January.
A new course offering pianists the chance to try out the harpsichord; tutor Jane Chapman.
25–27 January.

LEWES

Glyndebourne
01273 813813, Glyndebourne.com
The Virgin Mother and Child; Plainsong, Tallis, Tavener, Ord, James MacMillan, Gabriel Jackson, Byrd and much more: the Sixteen, Harry Christophers (d).
6 December: 3pm

OXFORD

St John the Evangelist Church, Iffley Road
01865 305305, www.TicketsOxford.com
Focusing on the relationship between the Virgin Mother and Child, the Sixteen contrast the sounds of early Renaissance polyphony with music by some of today's most admired composers; the Sixteen, Harry Christophers (d).
13 December: 7.45pm

PETERBOROUGH

Cathedral
01904 658338, ncem.co.uk
Handel *Arrival of the Queen of Sheba* from *Solomon, Let God Arise*, *Let thy Hand be Strengthened*, Overture to Jephtha, *Dixit Dominus*; Harry Christophers (d), The Sixteen, Grace Davidson, Charlotte Mobbs (sop), Katy Hill (alto), Jeremy Budd, Simon Berridge (ten), Ben Davies (bass).
6 February: 7.30pm

READING

Concert Hall
0118 9606060, www.readingarts.com/concerthall
Focusing on the relationship between the Virgin Mother and Child, the Sixteen contrast the sounds of early Renaissance polyphony with music by some of today's most admired composers; the Sixteen, Harry Christophers (d).
15 December: 7.30pm

ROBERTSBRIDGE

Vinehall School Theatre
01580 883092, www.vinehallschool.com
Torelli, J.S. Bach, Handel, Pisendel, Telemann; La Serenissima, Adrian Chandler (vln, d), Colin Scobie (vln), Simon Munday (tr).
7 February: 3pm

ROCHESTER

Cathedral
01634 843366, www.rochestercathedral.org
Handel *Arrival of the Queen of Sheba* from *Solomon, Let God Arise*, *Let thy Hand be Strengthened*, Overture to Jephtha, *Dixit Dominus*; Harry Christophers (d), The Sixteen, Grace Davidson, Charlotte Mobbs (sop), Katy Hill (alto), Jeremy Budd, Simon Berridge (ten), Ben Davies (bass).
26 February: 7.30pm

SAFFRON WALDEN

Saffron Hall
01799 588545, saffronhall.com
Focusing on the relationship between the Virgin Mother and Child, the Sixteen contrast the sounds of early Renaissance polyphony with music by some of today's most admired composers; the Sixteen, Harry Christophers (d).
20 December: 7.30pm
Handel *Arrival of the Queen of Sheba* from *Solomon, Let God Arise*, *Let thy Hand be Strengthened*, Overture to Jephtha, *Dixit Dominus*; Harry Christophers (d), The Sixteen, Grace Davidson, Charlotte Mobbs (sop), Katy Hill (alto), Jeremy Budd, Simon Berridge (ten), Ben Davies (bass).
27 February: 7.30pm

SOUTH WEST

BATH

Assembly Rooms
01225 463362, www.nationaltrust.org.uk/bath-assembly-rooms
J S Bach *Brandenburg* Concerto no. 1 in F major, Cantata 202 *Weichet nur, betrübte Schatten*, Vivaldi *In turbato mare irato*, Concerto in G major *Alla rustica*, Concerto in D major for violin, two oboes and two horns; Academy of Ancient Music, Mary Bevan (sop), Richard Egarr (d, hpsd).
20 February: 7.30pm

HEREFORD

Cathedral
01432 374200, www.herefordcathedral.org
Padilla *Missa ego flos campi*, Victoria *O magnum mysterium*, Fernandes *Xicochi*, English 16th-century Coventry Carol, Bach *In dulci jubilo*; Ex Cathedra Consort, Jeffrey Skidmore (d).
16 December: 7.30pm

POOLE

Lighthouse
0844 406 8666, lighthousepoole.co.uk
Bach *Christmas* Oratorio Nos I, III, V, VI; Armonico Consort and Baroque Orchestra, Christopher Monks (d), Gillian Keith (sop), William Towers (c-t), Nathan Vale (ten), Sir Willard White (bass).
6 December: 5pm

SALISBURY

Cathedral
0845 241 9651, salisburyfestival.co.uk
Bach *Christmas* Oratorio parts 1–3; Salisbury Cathedral Choir, David Halls (c), Charivari Agréable, Kah-Ming Ng (d).
12 December: 7.30pm

TOTNES

United Free Church, Fore Street
01803 849414, www.totnesearlymusic.org.uk
Clavichord Connections with music by Domenico Scarlatti, W.F. and J.C. Bach, with Julian Perkins on keyboard.
29 January: 7.30pm

WALES

CARDIFF

St David's Hall
029 2087 8444, www.stdavidshallcardiff.co.uk
Focusing on the relationship between the Virgin Mother and Child, the Sixteen contrast the sounds of early Renaissance polyphony with music by some of today's most admired composers; the Sixteen, Harry Christophers (d).
11 December: 7.30pm

The deadline for supplying information for the listings section in the March–May 2016 issue is 1 February 2016.
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In the March–May 2016 issue:

- Florilegium celebrate their 25th anniversary
- The Chiaroscuro Quartet talks to *EMT* about period-instrument Haydn and Mozart
- Paul Hillier examines Buxtehude and his influences

Q&A – Stephen Cleobury

PAUL GROVER

Stephen Cleobury directs the choir of King's College, Cambridge. Their forthcoming disc *1615: Gabrieli in Venice*, with His Majesty's Sagbutts and Cornetts, is shortly to be released on the choir's own record label and is the first audio Blu-ray disc to use Dolby's Atmos technology. Popular with the cinema industry for some while, Atmos enables the addition of height information to the surround sound, capturing the acoustic of a recording venue with far greater verisimilitude than has previously been possible.

MUSIC FROM GIOVANNI GABRIELI'S POSTHUMOUS *SYMPHONIÆ SACRÆ* OF 1615 FORMS THE CORE OF THIS RECORDING. HOW WOULD YOU DESCRIBE THIS MUSIC?

The music is very varied, with lots of different elements. You get some of the old-style fugal canzonas, of which there are a couple of examples from the brass ensemble in this recording, and you get examples of something that feels more like recitative, with perhaps a single instrument and figured bass and a soloist. You also get the combination of choir and brass in fantastically brilliant passages of music such as the *Iubilate Deo* that we recorded. It was a real journey of discovery, with the feeling of being able to get inside this particular composer.

IT'S A SUBSTANTIAL BODY OF MUSIC, WITH THE MAGNIFICAT, FOR INSTANCE, BEING SET SEVEN TIMES. HOW DID YOU DECIDE WHAT TO INCLUDE?

It was more a matter of deciding what to leave out! My friend and colleague Jeremy West spent some time in the Music Faculty Library in West Road, Cambridge, deciding which pieces from this magnificent collection we weren't, unfortunately, going to have room to include in this survey of Gabrieli! We chose pieces that were particular favourites of ours and tried to create a varied sequence, so almost every track will have a different combination of textures and instruments, scoring of voices and so on. I think there's a real variety here.

THIS TECHNOLOGY IS EXCEPTIONALLY WELL-SUITED TO COMMUNICATING THE SPATIAL DETAIL OF GABRIELI'S POLYCHORAL MUSIC, WITH ITS *CORI SPEZZATI* AND ANTIPHONAL ELEMENTS. WERE YOU ABLE TO MAKE ANY ATTEMPT TO REFLECT THE GEOGRAPHICAL CHARACTERISTICS OF SAN MARCO?

The space in the antechapel that you have when you take the chairs out made for some authenticity, but also enabled us to separate the three choirs in the *Magnificat*, say, physically, as what we have in common with St. Mark's Venice is the height, but sadly not the galleries, and each of the choirs is a different combination. You have one in which a solo bass sings at the bottom of the texture, which has some brass instruments, another choir with a solo voice at the top, and the third is a choir without brass instruments, so you hear three possible kinds of textured variation. So more or less each piece had its own kind of formation, because of the different combinations of choirs and instruments.

MUCH OF THIS COLLECTION, *IN ECCLESIIS*, FOR EXAMPLE, IS SUMPTUOUS, MAGISTERIAL, AWE-INSPIRING; HOW DID YOU FIND THE NECESSARY MOMENTS OF INTIMACY FOR A FULL-LENGTH DISC?

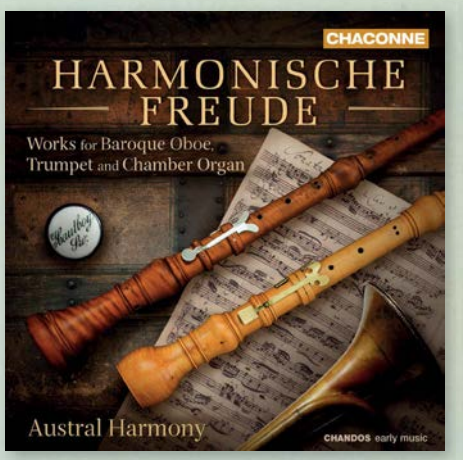
Well, in the *Suscipe* there are no fewer than six sagbutts and there are no trebles, so it's quite dark and sombre, and the effect of six sagbutts in this piece was quite overwhelming, I don't think I've heard that before, and whereas the *Magnificat* has great moments of brilliance, this piece is one that shows Gabrieli can write deeply expressive music.

Stephen Cleobury is always delighted to receive enquiries from potential choristers; the next chorister auditions will be held in January 2016. Visit www.kings.cam.ac.uk/choir for more information.

CATHERINE GROOM

CHACONNE

Early Music Highlights of 2015



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'… beautifully, joyously performed, this is a thought-provoking disc I look forward to revisiting and sharing with friends.'

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'These six suites reveal a strikingly individual and gifted composer, often reminiscent of Domenico Scarlatti. The exuberantly stylish Julian Perkins is just the man for the job.'

The Sunday Times (Culture)

CHAN 0805

'The group seem genuinely at home in the 18th century music ... The tempos are well chosen – dignified in the overtures and marches, lilting and swaggering in the airs and dances – and command of dynamics and ornamentation are superb throughout.'

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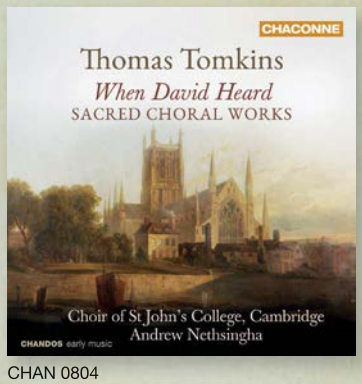

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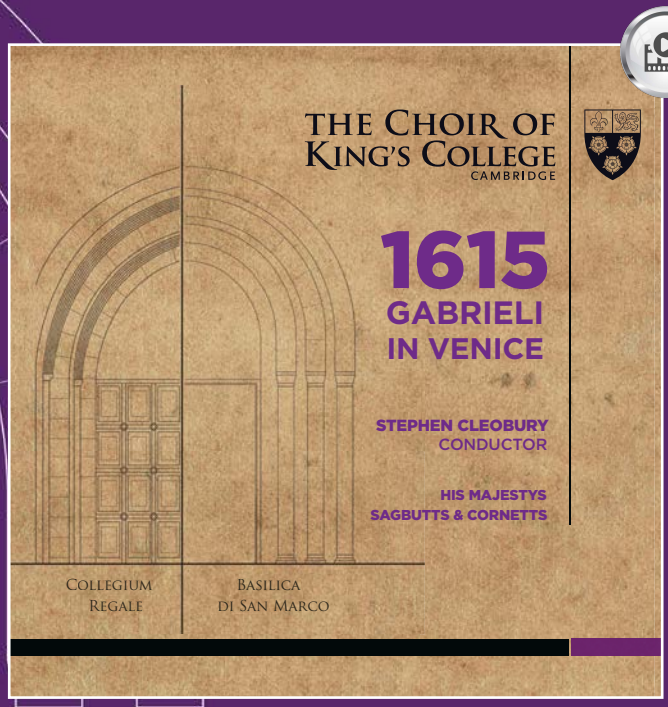

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